LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. BX 1755

Shelf .H3

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

John Geo: Law

TRUTH TRIUMPHANT,

AND

MISREPRESENTATION EXPOSED

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH,

IN A WINTER EVENING DIALOGUE BETWEEN

JOHN HARDMAN AND JOHN CARDWELL.

Printed for the Boston Catholic Tract Society.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1877
CITY of WASHINGTON

BOSTON:
SMITH & DAVIS, PRINTERS.

1829.

BX 1755
.H3

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH.

LETTER I.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, *in a* Series of Letters, *addressed to the Authors of "Letters to the Clergy of the Catholic Church, and more especially to the Rev. Thomas Shernburn, of Kirkham, in Lancashire."* By John Hardman.

1. Introduction. 2. The Authors not Catholic. 3. Tendency of Protesting Principles. 4. General Remarks on the performance.

Kirkham, Jan. 26, 1813.

GENTLEMEN,

1. You are truly a pretty pair of brothers, thus to sport with the credulity of your readers. Giving you ample credit for the apparent sincerity, and apparent piety of your professions, and taking you to be what you pretend to be, two Catholics, who, by searching the Scripture had discovered the errors

of the Catholic doctrine, I felt an unusual joy, proportioned to the novelty of the cause. Within the limited sphere of my own observation and memory, I have known many Protestants, who, by reading the Bible with diligence, and listening to the sermons of preachers, first of one sect, then of another, have become successively, Churchmen, Methodists, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, and so forth: nay, some of my neighbours, who, like myself, were educated Churchmen, have been successively members of all these different Religions. But while we see daily instances of this experimental zeal, and daily admire the diligence of research, which the desire of salvation inspires in the breasts of Protestants of every description, it has always appeared to me a singular and unaccountable fact, that a Papist is never converted. He loves his faith with obstinate attachment; and if he does ever forsake it, his motives are generally as obvious, as his sincerity is questionable; and in most instances that have come within my knowledge, he soon becomes the disgrace of our communion, as he is an outcast or apostate from his own. This disedifying result most commonly mars the triumph of a Papist's conversion. I therefore learned with pleasure from your recent publication, that the sincerity of your conversion was likely to redeem this scandal. I rejoiced to find that two ingenious young men, who

had been diligently brought up in the religion of Popery, had, by a diligent and conscientious perusal of the Holy Bible, been blessed with light to discover their errors, and with grace to renounce them: and I praised the Lord, for having, by the marvellous light of his word, withdrawn you from the darkness and bondage of Popery, into the light and liberty of the children of God.

Pleased with this discovery, I read over and over again your book entitled, "The Claims of the Catholic Church to be regarded as the true Church of Christ, briefly investigated; in a Series of Letters addressed to the Clergy of the Catholic Church, and more especially to the Rev. Thomas Sherburn, of Kirkham, in Lancashire." I made myself master of all the arguments by which you combat the errors of Popery. I was at the pains to verify, in our great Family Bible, all the references which you make to Scripture without quoting the text. Thus instructed by your discoveries, and emboldened by the triumph of your conversion, now, "thinks I to myself," I know all the weak parts of Popery, now I can refute any Papist; I am now a match for Mr. Cardwell.

Mr. Cardwell you know, is my friend and neighbour. His farm lies near my own. We have always lived together on good terms, and in a mutual intercourse of friendly offices. He is a kind neighbour, a faithful

friend, an upright, sober, benevolent, and good man. Having been blessed with the advantages of a good education, he amuses his leisure hours with reading, and has the reputation of being almost as learned as a priest. But, notwithstanding all these good qualities he is a stiff Papist, and so religious in his way, that he has been heard to say, that he would not change his religion, even if the King would make him Lord Lieutenant of the county. Though Mr. Cardwell is not forward to begin disputes about religion, he is always ready to defend his own, when it is attacked. Several of our neighbours and some preachers have at times been silenced by his arguments.

Said I to myself, I will visit my friend, and spend this long winter evening in his company. I will shew him this new pamphlet; I mean your "Series of Letters," &c. It will serve to introduce a discussion on religious topics. I have no hope of converting him; but as I love a little fun in my heart, and have qualified myself, by reading this book, to hold an argument with him, I will see what he has to say for himself. I went accordingly, and found my friend occupied with a book in his hand. Two or three others were lying on the table. He laid down his book, and received me with his wonted civility and kindness. After the usual compliments, and some observations on

the badness of the times, the lateness of the harvest, and the extraordinary severity of the season, I took your book out of my pocket, and asked him whether he had seen it. He told me that he had. After the best preface that I could make, I asked him with a tone of triumph, whether he was not now convinced that the Church of Rome was unscriptural, erroneous, corrupt, and anti-christian; whether Babylon was not at last fallen, or at least falling, since two of the sons of the scarlet lady had, by the aid of their own reason, and the light of the Holy Scriptures, discovered and denounced the abominations of their mother? This question led us into a long and interesting conversation on a variety of topics connected with your pamphlet. It is always gratifying to an author, to know what kind of reception his work meets with among readers of different descriptions. Of this conversation, therefore, it is my intention to give you a detail, as ample as my memory will enable me to give it, in this and my following letters.

2. To my first question, Mr. Cardwell replied by proposing another. With a look of earnestness mixed with good nature, he asked me whether I really supposed that your book was the production of a Catholic pen. I answered without hesitation that I did: and that I considered your arguments against Popery as new, convincing, and unanswerable.

I was not conscious that I was labouring under any delusion, or exciting his ridicule; but I flattered myself, that this bold and decisive tone would give me an advantage, and disconcert my friend. Judge then, how great were my surprise and chagrin, when he replied with a smile.

Mr. Hardman, I admire your simplicity in taking these writers to be Catholics. They are not Catholics, but Protestants, who have hoaxed you. They have laid a baited hook for the avidity of your religious prejudices, and I am sorry to see you among the gudgeons, who can swallow and digest it. If these authors pretend to put on the mantle of Catholicism, it is manifestly a suit that does not fit them. Their pretending to be Catholics is an obsolete and flimsy artifice, supported, it seems, with sufficient art and ability to impose on your credulity: but it is an artifice sufficiently obvious to the penetration of the simplest Catholic. They begin with a sanctimonious air of moderation and candour: but soon dropping the visor, and forgetting the assumed character which they had borrowed to serve a turn, they misrepresent our doctrine perpetually; they slander our church and vilify our persons, with all the malignity of vulgar scurrility. It is clear that they have never learned our cathechism, nor have been instructed in our doctrine. They know

it only as it is disguised and caricatured in the misrepresentations of our enemies. Hence, like many other Protestant controvertists possessed of greater talents and more extensive learning than themselves, these writers combat a phantom of Popery, which exists only in their own misconception. I assert, and can prove my assertion by an appeal to their own words, that they are ignorant of the doctrine which they pretend to refute, and in reality prove that they are strangers to it. It is the glory of the Catholic doctrine, that it cannot be refuted, till it has been first misstated and misrepresented. It might appear harsh to accuse your friends of wilful misrepresentation; because it is possible they know no better: but it is a suspicious circumstance when a man begins with a lie in his mouth. At all events, their pretending to be Catholics is a stale device of controversial imposture.

Here I signified my assent, and told Mr. Cardwell that I looked upon your book as a fair statement both of the Popish and Protestant doctrine: and insinuated that he was in danger of misrepresenting the character of your work. My friend continued. I repeat my assertion. You have quite mistaken the character of your favourite pamphlet. Its real character is, that one half of it consists of misrepresentations of your doctrine and practice; and the other half of misinter-

pretation and misapplication of the Holy Scriptures. Look first at their statement of our doctrine and practice. They tell us: "We have, it is true, been taught what we should believe and what we should practise; but the evidence of the former, and the wisdom and propriety of the latter, have never been presented to our view: we are consequently unable to shew any reason why we believe this or practise that." p. 1. They tell us again: that "an acquaintance with the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles makes no part of our religious education:" p. 6. that "with the New Testament, which contains all the will of Jesus Christ, we have no acquaintance, and that the generality of us are as ignorant of the word of Christ, as we are of the Alcoran." p. 46. They further assert, that "The faith of our church is directly opposed to that of the Apostles; and that instead of making the word of Christ the only rule of faith and practice, in our church the authority of man is the standard of both." p. 46. From such wretched premises, they draw this equally wretched inference; that "we are taught that our church has authoritative power to teach whatever doctrines she pleases in matters of faith." p. 8. Consistently with such notions respecting the principles of our faith, your friends proceed to delineate our moral conduct, and favor us with such precious discoveries as these. All we naugh-

ty Papists, say they, "are under the dominion of the lusts of the flesh; they have not found one individual among us who is not manifestly serving one or more of the lusts of the flesh: women and wine and strong drink are the prevailing objects of our pursuit." p. 45, 6. These slanders are frequently repeated, and sometimes in terms which modesty forbids us to cite. But enough of this. The passages which I have quoted, while they are such as a Catholic child can refute, are to me, and I hope to you also, sufficient evidence both of the ignorance and vulgarity of the authors. These erroneous principles and contracted notions are the groundword of your friends' boasted pamphlet. Thus beginning their controversial journey in the dark, they hurry their bewildered course o'er hill and dale, o'er hedge and ditch, till they fairly founder in the bog of scriptural misinterpretation.

3. But how came you, Mr. Hardman, a churchman, to follow them in their wild career? You ought to know better. The drift of their reasoning from the letter of the Bible is more hostile to your religion than it is to mine, and calls for a refutation from your divines, rather than from ours. The blow is ostensibly directed to us, but it is really aimed at you. How then, shall I account for your thoughtless commendation of such a work? I can easily account for it; but not

without disclosing a secret, which reflects little honour on Protestantism. Modern Protestantism, like ancient Paganism, is not one religion, but an heterogenous compound of many different systems of religion, differing from each other as much as they differ from us, in their creeds, in their mode of worship, and their forms of church government. Though faith is one, as God, the author of true faith, is one, yet unity of faith never was found, and never will be found among the discordant sects of Protestantism. The only unity discernible amongst you is of a base and spurious kind; sufficiently indicative of error, but no mark of religious truth: for it consists in an united hatred to that Ancient Church, from which all your various sects have revolted. For this reason the perverted education of the generality of Protestants teaching them to believe, that our religion is a wicked combination of every thing that is false in doctrine and corrupt in practice, teaches them also to hate it accordingly. Consistently with this hatred, which is the fruit of ignorance, they most loudly censure what they least understand. Trained in these habits, they not only consider any thing that is No Popery to be good Protestanism, but resemble the Jews, who, in former times slandered St. Stephen, for having, as they were pleased to assert, "spoken blasphemous things against Moses and against God;" and who

justified their hatred and persecution of "that pestilent fellow," St. Paul, by crying out, "men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law and this place, and who brought the Greeks into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." Acts vi. 11.—xxi. 28. The consequences of this evil spirit are lamentable both to us, and to yourselves. To us, by rendering us apparently a just object of bitter hatred and religious execration, and teaching men to adopt in practice the bright thought of an original genius and a profound Protestant casuist, that it is unlawful to tell a lie against any body but a Papist. Hounds, harriers, and curs, forget their several animosities, and join both in the cry and the chase to hunt down Popish game. To yourselves, by degrading faith from the dignity of a theological virtue, into a mere matter of human opinion. As the bond of unity amongst your various sects consists chiefly in a denial of Catholic tenets, for the very name of *Protestant* imparts this; so your faith is rather of the negative, than of the positive kind. It consists more of a strenuous denial of the fancied errors of Popery, than of a firm belief in those truths which God has actually revealed. And what is the consequence of this negative faith? Mark well the answer. That as faith by this new fashion, is made to consist in *protesting* or *disbelieving*, rather than in be-

lieving; he that disbelieves the most of Catholic truths is the most consistent Protestant. The Calvinist, accordingly, is a more consistent Protestant than the Church of England man; the Anabaptist a more consistent Protestant than the Calvinist; the Unitarian more consistent than the Anabaptist; and, perhaps, the Freethinker, or Infidel the most consistent Protestant of them all: because he protests against the greatest number of Catholic truths. This negative rule of faith, by which you all form your religion to your taste, just as a man chooses the colour and shape of his clothes, to please his fancy, authorizes and justifies every error and heresy which the wild imagination of men can invent; and deprives you of the means of refuting any. Certainly it destroys every real principle of unity among you, except that which subsisted among the ancient heretics, a unity in protesting against and hating that original and perpetual church, by which they were all condemned. You indeed talk much about religion and the rule of faith; but you reason little on these important subjects. You quote texts of Scripture, often misapplied, often obscure, and sometimes incomprehensible. Provided that you fancy that they are adverse to Popery, you rest perfectly satisfied, that they are both well applied, and clearly intelligible; whereas you shut your eyes to innumerable texts, that give the clearest testi-

mony to the evidence of Catholic truth. I know that in your protesting or disbelieving system, you all pretend to follow the Holy Scriptures. But this is an illusion. The word of God misinterpreted is no longer the word of God. It is degraded from its rank and dignity, and resolved into the word of man. Your arbitrary interpretations of the sacred text, neutralize its authority, by perverting its sense. Scripture is such, only in its true sense and meaning.

4. But, Mr. Hardman, you not only commend this Calvinistic pamphlet, but you tell me, that it contains new, convincing and unanswerable arguments against us. My idea of it is pretty much the reverse. All the arguments of these new foes to Popery, which have any weight, have been a thousand times objected by your divines, and a thousand times refuted by ours. I could easily show you the refutation of them all. It is an ungracious as well as an unprofitable task, to prove that your authors are entitled to honourable distinction in the Dunciad. But it would be easy to show, that their powers of argumentation are just commensurate with their powers of description; and that they are as little qualified to argue against our principles conclusively, as they are to state them correctly. Their knowledge and ingenuity are contracted within a very limited circle. They favour us with a specimen of their political

knowledge, when they condescend to inform us that "that power which abrogates laws is greater than the power which first enacted them, supposing the latter to be in existence." As if God could not abrogate the old law to establish the new; or, as if the legislature could not repeal, in one session, a law made in another. Then they have shewn some novelty and ingenuity in the following theological discovery: "This vaunted principle respecting the authority of the Church seems to ourselves," say they, "a sort of deifying of the Church: it has a tendency to wrest the sceptre from his Almighty hand, and to invest her with the powers of Omnipotence, while the practical exercise of this principle, if not actually, is nearly allied to the grossest idolatry." As if this newly discovered species of Popish idolatry, which is just as idle and visionary as the former ones, might not be retorted on themselves, by merely substituting the noun substantive *Scripture*, in the place of their noun substantive *Church*. If I allude to these specimens of their novelty and ingenuity in argumentation, it is not with a view of wasting any observations to correct the obliquity, or dissipate the darkness of ideas, which they exhibit; but to show you, that your invincible polemics are safer when they stand behind the entrenchments of others, than when they attempt to raise any new ones of their own.

You seem to think, Mr. Hardman, that because these authors quote the Bible, and declaim against Popery, they are profound divines, conclusive reasoners, and enlightened apologists of your parliamentary church. To this opinion I cannot subscribe. Their religion differs no less from the church of England, than it does from the church of Rome. Their religion, Sir, like that of many others, who follow Protestant principles, is a clumsy and ill-assorted piece of scriptural patch-work, consisting of scriptural shreds tacked together, according to their own capricious taste and fancy, without either the justness of proportion, the beauty of symmetry, or the rule of truth. They set out, it is true, on the Protestant principles; but being bolder than you in the art of protesting, they soon leave you many a furlong behind them. They affirm that the Bible contains the whole will of Jesus Christ, and the whole and sole rule of a Christian's faith. They affirm, as warmly as you do, "the Bible, I say, the Bible is the only religion of Protestants." We deny these principles. We prove them to be false, delusive, and enthusiastic. We are therefore authorized to reject the conclusions which result from them. You churchmen admit these principles. They are your own. Consistency requires therefore that you should admit the conclusions which these authors legitimately draw from the premises. You are

a stout church-and-king-man, Mr. Hardman, and can call out, *No Popery*, in an ale-house, or at a vestry-meeting, as loudly as any inhabitant of our parish. Now let me point to your reflection one specimen of the reasoning of these authors, in a case which comes home to your own feelings; a case which clearly decides either that your principles are false, or your church is erroneous. It will not only change your opinion as to the merits and orthodoxy of these authors, whom your aversion to our religion has taught you blindly to commend: but will at once shew you how the Bible may be abused by wanton interpretation; and how inadequately your own favourite Protestant Church of England can defend itself, by Scripture alone, against the arbitrary construction of mere Bible-men. These authors take up the Bible: they read it: and what does their contracted and vulgar cast of mind discover? That the Church should be without a clergy, a flock without pastors, save such as are of a Presbyterian description. What, you will say, are there to be no Protestant deacons, priests, vicars, rectors, deans, archdeacons, bishops, archbishops, with a king at their head, the Defender of the Faith? No. The independency of their ideas and presbyterian optics can discover none of this Popish trumpery in the Scripture. They tell you, that all such authority is an usurpation of the prerogatives of Christ! In the New

Testament they can discover nothing but the laity and *Office-bearers*. They say, "the laity consitute the Church, and teachers and pastors are its office-bearers." p. 15. I must remark that they have not pointed out either the chapter or the verse where this phraseology occurs in the Bible. Following your own authorized version, they find that a bishop is but an *overseer*, (Acts xx. 28*;) a priest

---

* The present *authorised* English version of the Bible still retains a leaven of the Calvinistic spirit, which Foreign and British reformers imported from Geneva, and which they copiously infused into the travesty English translations commonly used in the reigns of Edward VI. and Elizabeth. But as the English version stands at present, this spirit is perhaps no where more apparent, than in the translation of the Acts of the Apostles, particularly chap. xx. v. 28. Instead of translating this most important passage, as it is correctly translated in the Latin Vulgate, and the English Catholic Testament; "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you BISHOPS to *rule* the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;" it has contrived to mutilate the sense and degrade the expression to a degree scarcely exampled in any grave translation from other languages, thus: the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed, &c. I shall not stop to prove what every scholar must admit, that though the metaphor derived from the simplicity of primitive manners and pastoral life [illegible], in its lowest sense, means to *feed*, as a shepherd does his flock; yet when it is applied by the sacred writers to David, to Christ, or as in this place, to Bishops, and when it is applied by profane writers to kings, as it is by Homer to Agamemnon, (Iliad B. II. v. 85.) the verb *feed* does not express one half of its mean

is but an *elder;* (Acts xiv. 23.—xv. 4;) a deacon but a *servant*, (Acts vi. 2.) As to an Archbishop of Canterbury, a Bishop of Chester, a Dean of Peterborough, a Prebendary of Westminister, or Durham, a Vicar, or Curate

---

ing. The word *overseer* is duly qualified to keep company with its degraded associate, *feed.* The lowest degradation to which ingenuity can possibly reduce the etymon Επισκοπος, may be inspector, superintendant, looker-on, over-looker, supervisor, or *overseer.* But does this express half the meaning of the term? As well might we say that the overseer or supervisor of Durham, is the Bishop of Durham; and with equal propriety might we translate, Christus Pontifex noster, Christ our Bridge-builder, instead of Christ our High Priest. Much more than an overseer is implied in the venerable term which has been religiously incorporated into the language of almost every Christian nation. No pedigree in the Herald's Office is more honuorable or authentic than the etymology of the English word Bishop: in the original Greek, Επισκοπος; in latin, Episcopus; in Italian, Vescovo: in French, Eveque; in Spanish, Obispo; in German, Bischoff: in Dutch, Bischop; in Anglo-Saxon, Bipceop; in English, Bishop. If the English Protestant translators of the Bible, in Acts xx. 28. overlooked the English word Bishop, which never had more than one exclusive meaning, and have degraded the first officer of the church into the lowest underling of a parish, it is not from accident but design. Perhaps they intended it as a compliment to the Overseers of Nag's Head memory. Certain it is, such translating is not the word of God. Mr. Nolan has ably vindicated the authenticity of the Vulgate in this verse, as well as in the first Epistle of St. John, ch. v. v. 7. from the scepticism of Griesbach and other nibbling critics.

of Kirkham; all these institutions are but the filthy rags of Babylon. These institutions, say they, changing the word Popish for Protestant, are all unscriptural, all an usurpation of Christ's sole and exclusive priesthood. "The application of Scripture to such authority," they further tell you, "is such a manifest wresting of the words of Christ, that they find some difficulty in resisting the conviction that your church has wilfully perverted the Sacred Scriptures, to support her claims to such authority. Their argument stands thus: "The Apostles justly considered that the words of Christ, "All power is given to me," peremptorily excluded all separate, or conjunct authority. How then shall we reconcile the claims of your church in matters of authority, (even your Protestant church, consisting of a regal head with bishops, priests, &c.) with the offices of Jesus Christ? Her pretensions to such authority appear to us be an usurpation of the prerogatives of the Saviour.—All authority in matters of religion, except that of Christ, is strange to his people. He is the alone Prophet and King in the Church of God." Our divines are apt to smile, and yours to writhe at these levelling arguments of John Calvin.

Now, Mr. Hardman, I beg leave to observe that if this mode of reasoning, from the bare letter of the Scripture, be formidable and unanswerable, it is only so to you, and your

church authority, not to ours. We stand on more solid ground. This very spirit of your authors, among the Puritans, Presbyterians, and Independents, of former times, employed the same process of the *Bible alone interpreted by fanaticism*, both to overturn your church, to destroy the monarchy, and to deluge England with blood. They justified their rebellion by proclaiming no authority but the authority of Christ; no priest but priest Jesus; no king but king Jesus. To the Bible alone, as interpreted by themselves, they appealed both to justify their wickedness, and to sanction their atrocities. Our reverence for the Bible condemns such a flagrant abuse of the Holy Books, whether it proceed from an ancient Puritan, or from the modern Praise-God-Barebones, who have written this new, convincing and unanswerable pamphlet. If I did not feel an invincible repugnance to imitate your authors, in wantonly perverting the meaning and profaning the sanctity of the Bible, I could prove from express texts, that you are religiously obliged to wear only one coat; and that when you leave my fire-side, and return home, this cold, stormy winter evening, you ought to leave both your great coat and your pockets behind. The puritanical pamphlet which you so inconsiderately commend, without perceiving its tendency, is a tissue of confident ignorance, of coarse vulgarity, and blind en-

thusiasm. It has not convinced me of one error in the Catholic faith: but it has strengthened my conviction, that the Protestant Rule of Faith canot lead men to the unity of truth: but only into a multiplied variety of errors.

I shall resume the subject of our conversation in my next letter. In the mean time,

I am, &c. JOHN HARDMAN.

ANECDOTE.

Few persons are perhaps acquainted with the following anecdote of the late father of the faithful, Pope Pius VI., whose family name was Braschi. The circumstance happened in his youth, while he was engaged in the prosecution of his studies in the city of Cesena. It is thus related by an intimate friend of his, who was at the same time a fellow-student. "One evening we were taking our walk, when, on drawing near to a poor cottage, we were alarmed at the cries of distress that proceeded from it. Young Braschi, in the first moments of terror, felt inclined to make the best of his way from the place, but recovering himself, and repenting of his weakness, he advanced by himself to the door of the house from which the moans were heard, and I followed him. We knocked at the door; a woman excessively pale and thin

opened it for us, and asked what we wanted. "I heard," said Braschi, "some doleful cries from your house, and feared that some one of its inmates might be dangerously ill." "No," replied the woman, "but we are truly miserable. Those deep moans which you heard were my daughter's: her husband is in prison for debt; she is come here with four small children, without any means of setting her husband at liberty, or of providing for the support of her little ones, for whom we have not a single mouthful of bread for their supper." When their bed time came it was a heart-rending scene to hear their cries of hunger, and to witness the sad distress of their mother. "Alas!" said I to the good woman, as I took a small piece of money from my pocket and laid it on the table, "Scholars are not very rich, but rest assured that these little ones shall not want a meal in the morning." She thanked me with the most lively emotions of gratitude.—I was astonished that Braschi, with whose charitable dispositions I was well acquainted, gave nothing; I supposed, however, that he had no money with him. He merely asked what was the sum for which her son-in-law had been arrested. "For three hundred florins," replied the poor woman, "a sum too great for us to hope ever to have it in our power to raise in his favour." She then burst into tears. "Console yourself," said Braschi, "God never abandons

us; he provides resources when we least expect them." We then took our departure. I felt very desirous to enter into a conversation respecting the poor objects we had seen, but Braschi scarcely noticed my observations; he seemed to be entirely occupied with some idea that absorbed his attention.—I did not disturb his reflections; and we entered the city without any interchange of our ideas. The day following was a holiday; Braschi rose before day-light, and looked out for a a purchaser of his cabinet of natural history. Having got the price he wished for, he concluded a bargain, without my knowing it, for six hundred florins. As soon as he received the money he flew to the cottage, and in a low tone of voice called the good woman, who came to the door, and asked the purport of his coming. "I am come," said he, "to save life, and to give liberty to your son-in-law;" and, as he said this, he laid down a purse with the six hundred florins and withdrew in haste. The old mother overwhelmed almost with joy and surprise, called her daughter, and shewed her the purse. The trifle which I had given her the evening before, for the purpose of procuring a morsel of bread for the children, had penetrated the poor mother with sentiments of gratitude; the large sum offered by a person of Braschi's age and not think of abusing the goodness of heart of this amiable youth, by applying to our own use so considerable a sum, which must cer-

appearance, excited her suspicion. "I think," said she to her aged parent, "it will be better for us not to touch this money; the youth has perhaps been moved by our distress to dispose of this sum without the knowledge, or consent of his parents, and it would be an unpardonable abuse of confidence. Let us carefully lock up this purse, and then, if we are asked for it, we can give it back again." Two days passed from the time of our visit, during which we received our monthly allowance of pocket money. I did not forget the poor objects at the cottage, but carried a small part of the sum I had received for their relief. Like my friend, I had it not in my power to sacrifice all that I could have wished for the service of these unfortunate creatures; but how far did I find myself behind my illustrious rival in charity, when, on my arrival at the hut, the two women and children surrounded me, and before I had time to present them with my mite, asked me if I knew the young man who had visited them at the same time with myself. "Know him;" cried I, "yes; he is my best and most intimate friend." "Well," said the young woman, as she unlocked a box to take out the purse, "I beg you will take back this money either to him, or his parents; for we cantainly have been destined for some other purpose." My astonishment was extreme; but it soon gave way to admiration. I had previously noticed the motives of Braschi;

I had observed a man carrying away some cases from his apartments, but had no idea what they were. I should never have imagined that he, whose only delight was his cabinet, and who had constantly sacrificed to that object the money allowed him by his parents, could part with it for the purpose of rescuing from prison an entire stranger. Now, however, I felt satisfied that such was the fact. I therefore told the good people to banish all uneasiness, assuring them that the money was entirely at my friend's disposal, and was the fruit of his own economy and care.—"Ah!" said the young woman, "if I could but believe what you tell me, I should indeed be happy; but should reproach myself for having suffered my husband to languish two days longer in prison than I need have done" I replied, "If you doubt my word, come with me to the college, and there inquire by what means John Braschi became possessed of that sum of money."—"No, sir," said she, "that is not necessary; I will lose no time in putting the money of my benefactor to its proper use, in setting at liberty my poor husband, and restoring life to his almost perishing family. I offered to accompany her to the prison; we found there her husband, an old soldier, covered with honourable scars. The want of integrity, and the disloyalty of one of his comrades, for whom he had given bond, had brought him to his wretched state of misfortune, which he

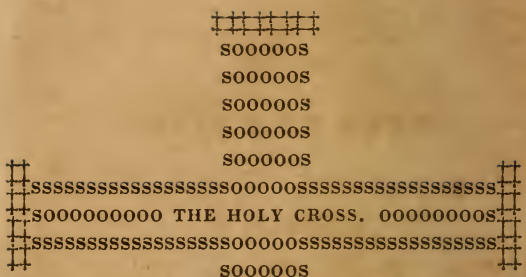
bore with heroic resignation. But when he was told that an angel of charity was now restoring him to his family, his fortitude seemed to abandon him. Better able to support adversity than prosperity, at the news of his good fortune, he grew pale, and sunk down almost lifeless. Being supported for a time by his wife, he recovered, and gave himself up to joy and gratitude. On approaching the college, I cried out to my friend, as soon as I perceived him at a distance, "Braschi, Braschi, I have met with some amateurs who are desirous to view your cabinet of natural history." "It is not in proper order at present," he replied, "I cannot shew it." "Well," said I, "but you will not refuse a sight of it, as it is to the poor inhabitants of the cottage." "O heavens!" he exclaimed "I am betrayed!" I then related to him the manner in which my parsimonious alms had led to the discovery of his noble deed of charity, which he had endeavoured to conceal with as much care as another would employ to hide some grievous fault. For my own part, I took as much delight as the poor people did to publish what he strove to conceal. The friends of Braschi congratulated his parents on their having a son endowed with such rare dispositions, and said as the jews did respecting the precursor of our Lord, St. John the baptist, "What manner of man, think you, will this child be ?

COMMUNICATED.

ODE TO THE CLOSING YEAR.

Oh! why should I attempt to ring
The knell of Time in sorrowing tone,
Or sadly tune my Lyre to sing
A *Requiem* o'er the year that's gone?—
It has not been to me so bright
That I should mourn it's timely end,
Or sit me down in grief to write
Farewell to a departed friend!—
And if 'twould tarry now with me,
I should in sooth be apt to say,
Pass on! I've had too much of thee,
To thank thee for an hour's delay!

Thy course was marked, dark closing year,
By many a sigh and bitter tear;
By promised joys too long delayed,
By hopes that only bloomed to fade,
By all that steals the cheek's warm glow
And loads the heart with silent wo,
Damps the gay plumes of Fancy's wing,
And nips her blossoms 'ere they spring—
And turns the lightsome lay of gladness,
E'en in its flow to strains of sadness,
And shades with clouds of care and fear
The promise of another year.—


SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
SOOOOOOOOO THE HOLY CROSS. OOOOOOOOS
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS
SOOOOOS

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH.

LETTER II.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, *in a* Series of Letters, &c. &c. &c.

1. The Catholic Faith not Changeable—but Fixed. 2. Reformed Faith not fixed—but changeable.

Kirkham, Jan. 26, 1813.

GENTLEMEN,

1. Though these general observations of Mr. Cardwell, on the nature, the character, and tendency of your "Letters to the Clergy of the Catholic Church," had not struck my mind before, I could not in the secret of my own breast, help admitting the justice aud propriety of his remarks. I felt rather mortified that my friend had discovered the anarchical principles and spirit of the presbyterian levelling of your pamphlet, which though obvious when pointed out, had hitherto been invisible to me. Neither was I much gratified

with his remarks on the *protesting* principle as a criterion of truth. I was sensible that the terms protesting, or protestantism, do not occur in the Scriptures, our only Rule of Faith; and I now saw evidently that though both you and I are Protestants, your religion differs from mine, as much as mine does from Popery. But smothering the chagrin and disappointment which I felt at the turn which our conversation had taken, and apprehensive lest Mr. Cardwell should divert me from my intended attack on the corruptions of his church, and put me on the defence of my own, I here begged leave to interrupt him. Well, said I, whoever the authors of this pamphlet may be, whether wavering Papists, or Protestants in disguise, is a matter of little consequence: but one thing you must admit; that they have fully exposed the pretended authority of your church to teach whatever doctrines she pleases as matters of faith; and have demonstrably proved that this leading principle of Popery, which caused and justified the Reformation, is repugnant to Scripture, and blasphemous to the Almighty.

Hold, said Mr. Cardwell, I am happy to agree with you that such a principle is equally absurd and impious: but that principle is not ours. Our church claims no such power; she pretends to no such authority; she never pretended to exercise it. It is an assertion which would not be tolerated in any Catholic

writer. On the contrary, it would certainly be condemned as heretical. Our faith is no secret: it is not hidden under a bushel. We clearly profess and openly avow our religious principles in the face of the universe. A child may learn them in a few days,—a cultivated understanding in a few hours. Now, Mr. Hardman, let me request your attention. The faith of the Catholic Church is not arbitrary, but fixed; not changeable and reformable at the pleasure of man: but originally delivered to the Church, in unchangeable perfection, by the positive revelation of God. It is in our estimation unlawful, and a criminal act of pride and presumption, for man to change what God has declared unchangeable; or, in other words, to reform what God has made perfect. Therefore it is, and it has always been, the steady principle and practice of our Church to resist all innovation, all attempts to improve the original deposite of Divine Revelation; and to contend earnestly for that faith, and that only which was originally delivered to the Saints. *Jude* iii. By a constant adherence to this rule, our faith is transmitted uniform and unchanged from generation to generation. David, and Isaiah said, "the truth of the Lord endureth forever." *Psalm.* cxvi. *Is.* xl. 8. Our blessed Saviour announced, with awful solemnity, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." *Matt.* xxiv. 35.

His Apostle, St. Paul declared: "Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have *preached*, ... than that ye have *received*, let him be anathema," (*Gal.* 1. 8.) declaring the Church to be "the pillar and ground of truth;" (1 *Tim.* iii.) terms by no means emblematical of instability, or change. So we freely admit, that we have neither the right nor the authority to make any change in the faith, which we have received, knowing from whom we have received it; much less to believe, or teach what we please. Our religion is not like a disputable and improvable system of philosophy: it is not a matter of speculation, but of fact. What God has graciously condescended to reveal, and Jesus Christ has taught, is the measure and rule of our faith. Where the doctrine of Jesus Christ is in question, we deem addition, or retrenchment equally criminal. To this doctrine, in its full extent, as understood by the wise, the learned, the great, and the good, in every age of the Christian Church, we adhere, and by this we abide. This faith is a bond of unity, which links us with the Holy Catholic Church, subsisting in all ages, teaching all nations, and maintaining all the truths of divine revelation.

What a striking contrast! While the various and countless sects of Protestantism are ever wavering and unsettled in faith; dif-

fering from all others, and dissatisfied with themselves; always seeking, or pretending to seek, and yet never coming to the truth; it is a singular fact, and beautiful as it is singular, that the Catholics all profess, and are all happy and satisfied, both in mind and conscience, with professing one and the same faith. Though our numbers are beyond the power of calculation; though, speaking collectively, we have lived in ages the most distant from each other; though we inhabit climates the most opposite, and countries the most remote; though we differ in language, in manners and customs, in national prejudices and forms of civil government, and in almost every thing else; yet in this one point we all agree. United in the profession of the same faith, we all form but one family in Jesus Christ. I am not declaiming, but stating a fact. What our virtuous and eloquent Pastor, Mr. Sherburn, teaches in our chapel, as essential to faith, is taught as such by all his Apostolic brethren. He is under his own Bishop, in communion with them. Our Bishop, united with his clergy, is under that Supreme Authority which Christ established, in communion with all the Bishops and Clergy of the Catholic world. In Europe and Asia, in Africa and America, we form but one body, animated by one spirit, and united in one belief. But further still: This beauty of Catholic unity is not peculiar to the present age. Our faith is the

faith of the ages that are past—the faith of the Fathers in the Council of Trent—the faith which St. Augustine preached to our Pagan Ancestors— the faith which was professed in the Council of Nice—the faith which was preached by the Apostles of Christ, and by them delivered to their successors, to be transmitted with religious reverence to all succeeding generations. Not the smallest variation in matters of faith is discernible among the uncountable millions " of all ages and nations, and tribes, and people, and tongues," who profess, or have professed the Catholic belief. Walking steadfastly in this way of unity, no doubts distract our minds, no terrors distress our consciences about the truth of our religion. Satisfied that our Church, and no other, follows the perfect rule of truth, our only solicitude in matters of religion, consists in our doubts and fears, whether we live up to the sanctity of our profession; and whether the purity of our lives be answerable to the integrity of our faith. And as our faith is not insular, but catholic; as it is a positive, not a negative thing, and consists in believing, not in protesting; so we are the very reverse of you. You adopt new fashions in religion; we cling with affectionate and reverential attachment to the old. You love to make experiments, and are pleased with new inventions; we, considering that truth in these

matters is more ancient than falsehood, reject your experiments in religion, and consider all your new inventions, at best, as suspicious. Hence you may have observed the fact, but perhaps without considering the cause, that we are as fixed in religion as you are unsettled; because we have found that peace and comfort, which by the wise ordinance of Providence, are, in the by-ways of error, commonly sought in vain.

You see then clearly, Mr. Hardman, how the matter stands. So far from claiming the authority of teaching whatever doctrines she pleases, as matters of faith, our Church cannot, without swerving from her most essential principles, make any alteration in the faith, which she first received from its authentic source, and has religiously preserved pure from all human mixture. She is the faithful witness and guardian, not the inventor of the truth All that she pretends to is to testify and declare what is the faith, which has flowed to her by a clear snd uninterrupted stream of tradition, from this pure source. Taking the Catholic Church therefore, abstractly, as the most ancient, incomparably the most numerous, and for piety and learning the most illustrions society of Christians, professing to adhere to the faith delivered, and to reject all innovations as profane; it is morally impossible that she should ever be capable

of departing from the faith originally revealed by Christ, and preached by his Apostles. That *individuals* should depart from the faith, and introduce "damnable heresies and sects of perdition," it is natural to expect. This is only what Christ foretold. This is what the Apostles themselves had the affliction to behold. This is what the church which they established, and which they commanded us to hear, has witnessed in every succeeding age, and in none more visibly than in the present. But for the Universal Church to deviate from the faith, requires the consent of so many millions, the revulsion and laceration of so many fixed principles of belief, that such an alteration, I repeat it, is morally impossible. But admitting the inspiration and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures; admitting that the Church and the Pastoral charge of the church are the work of Divine Institution, and that faith cometh by hearing; if we proceed a step further, and consider the Catholic Church as that Society which was instituted by Christ, formed by his Apostles, instructed by his word, supported by the promise of his perpetual aid, and ever guided by the unerring influence of the Spirit of Truth, the impossibility of its altering the original deposit of Divine Faith, is fully established to the satisfaction of our minds. Our faith therefore is

not built on the sandy foundation of human judgment and deceitful speculation; but on the solid rock of divine authority and unalterable truth. Our firm conviction of this truth is the real cause of a fact which must often have attracted your notice and excited your surprise; that a well-instructed Catholic is never found either unsettled in religion, or wavering in faith. He makes no changes in his religious creed; because he knows that every change is for the worse.

Much has been said, and much has been written by Catholic divines, on this very interesting and very pleasing subject. Their judgment, their learning, and their eloquence, have dispersed the mists of hoary time; and have invested this long chain of Catholic tradition with an unequalled blaze of evidence. I refer you to them, and only skim the surface of the subject. There are two ways of proving that the faith of the Catholic Church remains unchanged. The first is arguing *a priori*, as I have done, by shewing from the nature of the Church and the rule of its profession, that a change is improbable, if not impossible. The second way is arguing *analytically*. In this way we take each separate tenet as it is now actually professed by us, and controverted by you; for instance, the Supremacy of the Pope, the Real Presence, Prayers for the Dead, the In-

vocation of Saints, Confession of Sins, and so of the rest. We compare our belief respecting this individual tenet, with what was believed in the age which preceded us; with the faith which prevailed in the five, ten, fifteen ages which preceded that; we compare it with the definitions of past Councils, and the doctrine of the primitive Fathers; we compare it with the confessions of ancient, and the concession of modern Heretics; with the language of the ancient Liturgies, the significancy of ancient ceremonies and religious customs; and through this correct medium, trace its identity to the very time of the Apostles and of Christ. Either way leads to the most satisfactory result, and conducts the sincere inquirer to the discovery of the truth. I shall only observe that Challoner, Hay, Des Mahis, Harwarden, and Manning, have generally adopted the former method. Gother in his *Nubes Testium*, and more at large, Mr. Berrington, in his recent and elaborate publication, *The Faith of Catholics proved from Scripture, and attested by Tradition*, a work which acutely examines and cross-examines the evidence, and with great impartiality exhibits the faith of the Greek, Latin, and Oriental Fathers and Councils, of the first four centuries, have followed the latter. Bossuet in his Treatises, and his History of the Variations of the Protestant

Churches, Mr. Fletcher in his unrivalled Sermons on the four Marks of the Church, and Mr. Lingard in his elegant tracts in the Durham Controversy, to pass over many other writers of sterling value, have formed a happy combination of both these methods of demonstration. All together have proved satisfactorily the sameness of our faith with that of all preceding ages, and have placed the unchangedness and unchangeableness of our faith, on every controverted point, in the clearest and most satisfactory light. These able combatants have employed the same weapons for the purpose of aggression as well as self defence. They have shewn, *a priori*, that the peculiar doctrines of what is called the Reformation, are false, because they are new. They have also shewn it in detail, by demonstrating that in point of faith, in which you differ from us, you vary, in an equal degree, from the venerable antiquity of Apostolic truth. You will excuse me from entering further, at present, into this extensive field. If you wish to proceed further into it, for your own satisfaction, I have pointed out the way, and furnished you with safe guides.

That pamphlet of a Presbyterian Elder, which you have brought in your pocket, has extorted these observations from me. I hope they have proved to your satisfaction, that

we Catholics are not such fools as he would teach you to believe; and that your zealous Elder is either ignorant of the doctrine which he attempts to refute, or guilty of contemptible slander, when he asserts that "the Catholic Church claims authority to teach her Children to believe what she pleases as matters of faith," or that we can give no reason, (to use his own elegant expression,) "why we believe this or practise that."

I deem these remarks sufficient to prove that the Catholic faith is not a changeable system of belief. I might confirm the same truth by an appeal to a great variety of the clearest and most important passages of the New Testament; to the intentions, designs, and promises of Christ; to the sentiments, instructions, and actions of the Apostles. I might bring forward a body of evidence to prove the same position from the consideration of Christ's Institution of the Sacred Ministry, the perpetuity of its Holy Orders, and lawfulness of its mission. All these considerations, in which a Catholic Divine is peculiarly and exclusively at home, furnish clear evidence of the immutability of Catholic truth. But as hundreds of our divines have both satisfactorily established these ground-works of our faith, and successfully repelled all the attacks of their enemies, I forbear to prolong the discussion.

2. I have only one more observation to recommend to your notice on this subject. It ill becomes the children of what you call the Reformation, to accuse us of the laxity of believing what we please. You charge us with this absurd principle, in contradiction both to our own professions and positive matter of fact, and yet, at every step, you assert this privilege yourselves, and pursue it into all the ramifications of error. Without the exercise of this principle of believing what you please, both your ancestors and yourselves would have continued to this day in the Communion of the Catholic Church, and the Reformation would never have existed. This was the origin, the principle, the motive, the very soul of your Reformation. I have already observed that ours is an old religion, and has an attachment for the good old fashions. With us, whose faith is fixed, improvement or alteration, reformation or corruption of the faith means the same thing. In our vocabulary, they are synonimous terms. We care not what choice of expressions ingenuity may employ to cover a deviation from the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith of our most ancient original Church. We are not misled by the name. We look to the thing. Men may employ the pompous term of Reformation to conceal their innovations in faith, just as revolution-

ists perpetrate the blackest horrors under the specious name of liberty. In either case we see the delusion, and detest the crime.

There are two kinds of Reformation indicated in the Holy Scripture—a reformation of morals, and a reformation of the faith. The first is enjoined as an indispensable duty: the second foretold, but condemned as a serious evil. I shall not quote a multitude of texts to shew this. But I am convinced, that if your Reformers had employed themselves in the first kind of reformation, they would have found work enough, without attempting the second. If they had reformed their own pride and ambition, their own sensual passions and shameful lust, they never would have laid their sacrilegious hands on the sacred Ark of Faith. The reformation of faith is not a modern invention. It was begun by "men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith" in the Apostolic age; and the unhallowed work has been continued in all succeeding times, by men who rejected the rule of Catholic unity, and asserted the privilege of believing what they pleased. Thus in the first age of the Christian Church, Ebion and Cerinthus were reformers, and taught their reformed disciples to believe that Jesus was the Son of Joseph and Mary. In the second century Montanus was a reformer, and taught his reformed disciples to believe that females

were capable of the sacred Ministry, and that the Church had not the power to absolve from sins. In the third age, Sabellius and Novatian were reformers, and taught their reformed disciples, the former, that there was no Trinity of Persons; the latter, as Montanus had done, that the Church had not unlimited power to absolve the penitent. In the fourth age, Arius, Aerius, and Jovinian, were reformers, and taught their reformed disciples new improvements. Arius taught, that Christ was not consubstantial with the Father; Jovinian, besides his almost Lutheran aversion to celibacy, taught that fasting and corporeal austerities were useless; Aerius taught that prayers for the dead were unprofitable, and invented one of Calvin's leading principles, that Bishops and Priests are equal. In the fifth age, Pelagius, Vigilantius, and the Predestinarians, turned reformers. Pelagius taught his reformed disciples to believe that original sin was a fable, and divine grace unnecessary; Vigilantius, that prayer to the Saints was unprofitable, and a respect for their relics superstitious; the Predestinarians, that God created some to be damned. In the eighth century, the Iconoclast reformers taught that every piece of canvas or marble that represented a religious subject was superstitious. In the eleventh, Berengarius became a reformer, and taught his re-

formed disciples to believe, that in the Holy Eucharist, the body of Christ was not really present, but really absent. I pass over several tribes of fanatical reformers, the Manicheans, who admitted two principles; the Petrobrusians, who denied the sacrifice of the Mass, Prayers for the Dead, and Infant Baptism; the Waldenses, who maintained that a Minister of the Church could not possess any property without sin, and that all dominion was founded in grace; the Albigenses, the Wickliffites, and Hussites, who revived many ancient errors, and invented new ones. It is true, that our old fashioned Church, which had seen the sects of these various reformers rise and fall one after another, had the ill manners to consider all these reformers as heretics, and their reformed doctrines and improvements of the faith as heresies, and condemned them as such.

But these were timid and bungling reformers. Most of them were only retail dealers in new doctrines, and never acquired any extensive or permanent credit. One thing is manifest; that although these reformers all quoted Scripture to establish their several errors, they all followed that rule of faith, which you and your Presbyterian friend so unreasonably impute to us, the liberty of believing or disbelieving what they pleased.

This is the hinge on which all the reformation of these Heseriarchs turned.

In the sixteenth century, Luther, a German friar, began to rival, and soon eclipsed the feats of these reforming worthies. I need not say that this wholesale innovator, while he lived in his monastery, was humble, meek, devout, and chaste; but that as soon as he turned reformer, he exchanged these virtues for their opposite vices, and became a man of violent temper, extreme vanity and pride, and ungovernable lust. All this he himself admits. His style of eloquence was peculiar to himself; but like his moral character, as far remote as possible from that of an Apostle, or envoy of God. His language, larded with devils and bedaubed with filth, is such a sink of coarse declamation and rancorous invective, as never astonished the world either before or since. I could refer you to his works for evidence of this. Brereley, in his learned work, the Protestant's Apology for the Roman Church; Bossuet, in his History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches; and Bishop Milner, in his Letters to Dr. Sturges, have given a great variety of quotations from the printed works of this reformer, which the friend of modesty and decency cannot read without horror and disgust. Thus qualified, he began and became the chief agent in that revolution which

you call the Reformation. I have looked for the holiness of this revolution in religion, in its author, in its origin, in its motive, in the means of its establishment, in its effects; but I have looked in vain. The holiness of Luther's reformation I cannot find.

The Catholic faith is a regular and well-connected fabric, formed by the hand of a Divine Architect. Every part of it is connected with and dependent on the whole. Luther hastily and passionately abandoned this, without having yet framed any preconcerted system of belief. Accident and resentment guided his choice, both in his abandonment of his ancient faith, and his contrivance of a new one. From enveighing against some local and temporary abuses in the dispensation of Indulgences, he proceeded to deny their efficacy. This led him to the consideration of the Sacrament of penance, the other Sacraments, the Remission of Sins, Justifying Grace, &c. and every step led him further into error. Having once begun to roll down the hill of reformation, he knew not how to stop the headlong impetuosity of his course. He proceeded to demolish one revealed dogma after another, with fatal, but not remorseless activity. To supply the immense void which he had created, he revived the defunct heresies of Montanus, Novatian, Aerius, Vigilantius, Berengarius, and the

Iconoclasts, and made a selection from the doctrines of the Antinomians, Predestinarians, Waldenses, and other enthusiasts, as chance, or accident, or fancy suggested. To these exploded errors, he added equally extravagant inventions of his own; such as a new system of faith and justification, a new system of sacramental doctrine, a new and commodious system of church government, of divine worship and moral duty. In all these changes, what rule did he follow? The rule of all preceding reformers, which was the liberty of believing what he pleased in matters of faith. This turbulent and sensual innovator adopted or rejected, believed or disbelieved what he pleased, till the violence of his remorseless passions, or his fanaticism, disordered his understanding. Thus a private individual, not remarkably recommended by any extraordinary virtues, bnt confessedly disgraced by some notorious vices, in defiance of the regular and ordinary authority of Christ's Church, without mission, without miracles, introduced all these changes of religion—as great changes as those which were sanctioned by the miracles, and divine missions of Moses and Jesus Christ. All this infatuated collection of compiled and invented, of ancient and modern heresies, he taught his deluded disciples to call a reformation of religion.

But this was only the beginning of the evil. In spite of the prohibition and curses of Luther, his disciples soon claimed their master's privilege of believing and teaching what they pleased. Actuated by this rule and principle, they soon formed more systems of religion, than you or I can enumerate.—From the operation of this unholy, this licentious principle, in a few years, Zuinglianism, Calvinism, Anabaptism, Arminianism, Socinianism, and twenty other sects, sprung up on the continent, and were soon transplanted into this country. From the operation of this same principle in our island, which was then Catholic, some adopted the opinions of Henry or Seymour, of Cranmer or Elizabeth, of Presbyterians, Puritans, Unitarians, Independents, Dippers, Quakers, Methodists, Swedenborgians, and so forth, down to the last of our Protestant prophets and reformers, whether male or female. From the operation of the same principle, while I still adhere to the old creed of my fathers, of your fathers, who saw the beginning of every modern sect, some of my neighbours follow one religion, some another, trying all, except the right one, by turns, and sticking long to none. After three hundred years of industry, the reformation is not yet completed; and it never will be completed, as long as men usurp the authority of believing what they please.

Of all these various and discordant sects, only one can be the true Church. Can you tell me what I am in conscience bound to obey, to the exclusion of all the rest? Can you give me a satisfactory reason why I should prefer the reformer Luther to the reformer Arius: why I should prefer Elizabeth to Knox, Wesley to Priestly, or any of them to Mrs. Southgate? I defy you to do so, without violating the principle from which all these reformations sprung: a principle which if it be condemnable in one sect of Protestantism, is condemnable in all.

My point is proved. I hope you now admit it. Our religion is essentially fixed.—Yours is essentially changeable. Ours is wedded to unity. Yours is a stranger to it. Ours was delivered. Yours invented. We in Peter's ship are held by a sheet anchor safe in our moorings. You are afloat on the ocean of conflicting opinions, without a pilot, without a compass, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. iv. 14. Enjoying this consistency of faith and security of conscience, believe me, Mr. Hardman, we Catholics see uothing to envy in that mobility of faith which is so natural, that uneasiness of conscience which is so common and so reasonable among the various sects of re-

formed Christians. Neither do we feel the slightest temptation to exchange our apostolic and immutable rule of faith for the Protestant privilege of believing as many errors as we please: but while you profess the creed of the Apostles of the reformation, "I believe whatever I please," let the Catholic, without censure, enjoy so much of your privilege, as to profess his rule of faith in the *Creed of other Apostles:* I BELIEVE THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Gentlemen, I must reserve my reflections and reply for my next letter.

I am, &c. JOHN HARDMAN.

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH.

LETTER III.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, *in a* Series of Letters, &c. &c. &c.

1. Mr. Hardman's Perplexity. 2. Cause of Protestant Inconsistency. 3. Catholics duly reverence the Holy Scriptures. 4. Dr. Hardwin's "Rule of Faith truly stated."

Kirkham, March 25th, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

1. Here Mr. Cardwell paused, as if he waited for my reply. I was, I confess, in a kind of reverie at the moment, reflecting on the striking contrast which he had just presented to my notice. I had often observed the fact, with a degree of surprise and envy, that a Papist never doubts about the truth of his religion; while Protestants of all descriptions are so apt to be disturbed with doubts about the truth, and scruples about the security of theirs. The instructed Papist, I was saying

to myself, has something in his religion, which we have not in ours. He is fixed and immoveable in his faith. At the approach of death, as well as in the midst of the gaieties of life, he firmly believes that he is in the right road, and has only to follow it to obtain salvation. He feels neither fears, nor doubts, nor scruples on that point. Though we ply him with numberless texts of scripture, and reproach him with ignorance of the Bible; though we study to annoy and scandalize him with outrageous invectives in every shape, and with exaggerated tales of the tyranny of their Popes, the vices of their clergy, the persecution of Mary, the horrors of the inquisition—things which, if they were true, candour must allow, are no concern or fault of his; though we denominate his church superstitious, idolatrous, and apostate, and call the Pope Antichrist, and other opprobrious nicknames; yet so it is: in spite of all our abuse and contempt of the Roman Church; nay, in spite of the painful oppression of severe penal laws, he smiles at our efforts, and remains as immoveable as a rock. He is as fixed, as we are unsteady. He is as much at peace, as we are uneasy. His religion has some principle of union and security to which ours is a stranger. I have even known Papists amuse themselves at our expense, and make both our scruples and changes in religion a matter of ridicule and banter. I

have sometimes heard them say, "Such an one was twenty years ago brought up a churchman; then he turned Methodist; then Presbyterian; and last week he was dipped an Anabaptist in a horse-pond: where will the blockhead's Bible lead him to next?"

However, recollecting myself, and having previously learnt my lesson from your pamphlet, I replied: "We Protestants do not believe what we please. We follow the scriptures. The Bible is our only rule of faith. But how can you have the rule of truth? The doctrine of Christ and his Apostles makes no part of your religious education. With the New Testament you have no acquaintance. The generality of you are as ignorant of the words of Christ, as you are of the Alcoran."

2. Sir, replied my friend, your favourite authors of this invincible pamphlet, are blind guides, who have led you into a variety of mistakes. I have neither leisure nor inclination to follow them through all the wanderings of their groping blindness. But in compliance with your desire, I will endeavour to set you right in a few of the most essential particulars. Permit me, however, to observe, that I do not at all admire that embarrassment and darkness of reasoning which both bewilders your authors, and puzzles their readers. I love clearness of ideas. I like to see my way before me. Allow me therefore to refer your attention to one remark

which I have already made. The Catholic faith is one : the Protestant faiths are manifold. Our religion is always the same: yours as changeable as the wind. We are but one Church: you a collection of many different and discordant sects. This is a striking contrast, in which there is something radically wrong. This very fact, so visible and undeniable, if we attentively consider its origin, its nature, and its effects, is at first sight a very strong presumption that the Catholic is right, and the Protestant wrong. For, truth is one and consistent, error is manifold and contradictory: and as unity is the characteristic of religious truth, so variation is the mark of religious error. But without urging this consideration at present, here let me ask you, whence arises this singular contrast? How comes it that we preserve that unity, which cannot sojourn among you? Every effect must have an adequate cause: and an effect so momentous as the stability of our faith, and the mutability and uncertainty of yours, must have a very powerful cause indeed—a cause, which reaches to the very vitals of each system of religion. Sir, to go a little further than that which I have already advanced, the cause of this phenomenon, which is so honourable to us, and which is so humiliating, and ought to be so alarming to you, is not wrapped up in darkness, or veiled in impenetrable mystery. It is visible and

manifest to every eye. It springs from this source. You follow a false and delusive rule of faith. We follow one, which as it is quite different in its nature, so it produces quite different effects. You profess to be guided by the Bible alone, as interpreted by your own individual judgment. We adhere to the Bible as interpreted by the original, perpetual, and Universal Church. Yours teaches you to indulge the pride of individual curiosity and endless speculation, and consecrates all the errors which your ingenuity can invent. Ours teaches us the humility and wisdom of checking our own individual fantasies, and submitting with the docility of faith to the truths which Christ and his apostles taught. You deny the infallibility of the Catholic Church; and lo! you confer infallibility on every individual Protestant, be he wise or simple. Strange and unenviable inconsistency! you give to every one of your disciples more extensive authority, than we give to the Pope and the whole Church united. How can such a strange anomaly lead you to unity and truth? Shall I disclose the real fact? You may be said to have no rule of faith at all. The Bible is not a rule to you, but you are a rule to the Bible. You make it speak what you please.

3. But before I proceed to prove by argument, that your rule of faith is as false and delusive, as ours is safe, satisfactory, and

conducive to truth, let me request your attention to a few considerations. If we deny that the Bible is the rule of faith, our motives are, not as your authors assert, a preference of human opinions to the word of God, but a preference of the word of God to human opinions: not a contempt or neglect of the inspired writings; but a deference to the letter, a compliance with the spirit, an obedience to the voice of divine revelation. Our motives are a love of truth, and a respect for the Bible. We respect the Bible more than you do. We respect it so much, that we think it impious to pervert or abuse it, either by profanation or misinterpretation. You, notwithstanding the hollowness of empty profession, respect it so little, that you make it the instrument and sanction of unlimited and endless error. Our respect for the Bible watches over the purity of its translation. Your want of respect recommends erroneous and corrupt translations, as the word of God. To tell you the truth, Sir, your reverence for the Bible is apparent, and ours real.

The Catholic Church, from her cradle in the Apostles' time, has been the chosen depository, the faithful guardian, and the successful preserver of the Holy Scriptures. To her and for her the whole of the New Testament was originally written. She has always duly estimated, as she now duly estimates, the immense value of this divine trea-

sure. She venerates as divine all the books both of the Old and New Testament. She considers them all "as given by inspiration of God, and PROFITABLE for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. As she received from the same source, so she admits on the same authority, and believes with the same faith, ALL the books of either Testament—not only the sixty six which you are pleased to allow, but also the nine or ten, amounting to one fifth of the Old Testament, and including the snblime and eloquent books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom, and the exemplary, instructive, and beautiful histories of Tobias, Susanna, and the Maccabees, which your deference to the chair of Moses, and hostility to the Church of Christ, have taught you to reject from the sacred canon as apocryphal. She reads them to her children. She recommends them to their pious and attentive perusal. Her Liturgy and public devotions are chiefly extracted from them. By their authority also she confirms the truths of her unerring Creed. But knowing that the best of books may be perverted by misconstruction, and abused by presumption, and having learnt by the long experience of fifteen centuries before your sects had any existence, that every pretended reformation of the faith, or rather let me say,

that every error and heresy which has scandalized and divided the Church of Christ, had its source in the abuse of good scripture, and sought to justify its usurpation and errors by arbitrary interpretations of the sacred text, She has always diligently and properly exhorted her children to read it with the dispositions of a reverent, humble and docile mind, that they may use it to profit, and not abuse it to their perdition. Conformably with this spirit of piety and wisdom, her discretion, fully justified by her reverence of the holy books and her knowledge of human weakness, has, in times of religious innovation and religious frenzy, regulated or restrained the reading of them, with a solicitude proportioned to the local or temporary dangers to which she saw the faithful exposed. Actuated by the same laudable motives, she watches over the purity of scriptural translation, and stigmatizes those versions, into which the spirit of heretical innovation has infused its poison. She has at all times broken to her children the bread of the divine word; but she has at some periods been admonished by external circumstances to forbear throwing pearls to swine. Our Church received the scriptures from her first pastors, the Apostles and Evangelists, from whom she had previously received the faith. From the same authority she received both the scriptures themselves, and the rule of interpreting them. To this she adheres in

spite of your senseless clamours. Her discipline, so far from being dictated by the motives which your divines so liberally, but so uncharitably impute to us, is sanctioned by sound sense, and commanded by the scripture itself. We are ever mindful of that admonition of our first Pope, the Apostle Peter: "Understanding this first, that no prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation." 2 Ep. i. 20. We adhere to the sound advice of another apostle: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust: but avoid profane and vain babblings, and opposition of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith." 1 Tim. vi. 20. "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast HEARD of me in the faith and in the love which is in Jesus Christ. Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us." 2 Tim. i. 13. Guided by these sound principles, a Catholic duly reverences the authority and justly estimates the value of the Holy Scriptures. He walks in the just medium between deficiency on the one hand, and a superstitious excess on the other; using them as a guide and helper in the right road; not as a delusive beacon to mislead him into the by-paths of error. When you separated from the Catholic Church, you carried the Bible indeed with you, but not the rule of interpreting it. Hence as we, by our rule, have preserved the integrity of faith,

so yours has made you the sport of continual error.

Mr. Cardwell here made an apology for speaking so long, and expressed an apprehension that the length of his discourse would fatigue my attention, and exhaust my patience. I assured him that his apprehensions were groundless; and feeling a great interest as well as curiosity in his conversation, I requested him to continue. Mr. Cardwell then proceeded.

The rule of faith is one of the most important subjects that can challenge the enquiry, or engage the attention of a Christian. Just as our rule is right or wrong, our faith is true or erroneous. If we walk in the right road, we cannot go astray. If we pursue a wrong one, it is more than probable that we shall go wrong, till we have forsaken it, and retraced our steps. This subject, which is, or ought to be decisive of every minor controversy in religious matters, has been treated by our divines with a diligence and a copiousness suitable to its importance; and on no subject has the exertion of their abilities been distinguished and rewarded with more brilliant success. I hold in my hand a complete treatise on this subject, published near a century ago, by a very eminent divine of our communion, the victorious defender of Catholic truth against the confederate hostility of Leslie, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson,—the Reverend Edward

Hawarden, D. D. It is entitled: *The Rule of Faith truly stated.* It exhibits a clear, methodical, and comprehensive view of the question, it almost exhausts the subjects: and besides its theological merits, is one of the best specimens of legitimate reasoning and conclusive logic in the English language. Though this eminent controvertist was followed by the ingenious author of Pax Vobis, and very recently by the Reverend Joseph Berington, the Reverend John Lingard, and Mr. Langley, who, each in the exercise of his peculiar powers, has shewn himself a worthy associate of the learned Doctor; yet he had left them little to do, but to expand his principles, to place some of his arguments in a new light, and to repel the attacks of subsequent opponents. Their united efforts have fairly met, fully discussed, and in my opinion clearly decided in our favour this paramount question. Their gigantic powers have compelled the arrogance of Luther, the fickleness of Chillingworth, the ludicrous scorn of the present Bishop of Llandaff, and, by anticipation, the petulant ignorance of your Calvinistic pamphleteers to bow down before them.*

* See the following recent publications: "Strictures on Dr. Marsh's Comparative View," &c. and "Preface" to "The Faith and Doctrine of the Catholic Church, by the Rev. John Lingard." See also "Letters on Religious Subjects, between a Dissenting Minister, in Birmingham, and a Roman Catholic, by William Langley."

These distinguished divines have not only established the truth and certainty of the Catholic rule of faith; but have swept away all those flimsy webs of textual and conjectural sophistry, with which the ingenuity of Protestant writers has contrived to obscure and deform it. They have proved, with the clearness of mathematical demonstration, that the Bible neither is, nor ever was intended to be, nor probably ever will or can be, the sole and exclusive rule of Christian faith. They have impannelled a grand jury, consisting of apostles and evangelists, of primitive Christians, and even modern Protestants, who have delivered their verdict; and that verdict has acquitted our rule, and found your's guilty. It would be presumptuous in me not to tread in their footsteps. Dr. Hawarden's "Rule of Faith truly stated" is composed with such clear method and exact precision, that it is easy to analyze it. His main arguments are reducible to the proofs of twelve propositions. Thus the substance of his reasoning lies within the compass of a nut-shell.

Mr. Lingard's arguments, it appears, have silenced the Bishop of Llandaff, though they raised an extraordinary peal of muttering thunder, but a *brutum fulmen*, in the Deanry of Peterborough. Mr. Langley, whose Letters may be considered as a full refutation of the Calvinists' "Letters to the Rev. Thomas Sherburn," have taught the Dissenting Minister the prudence of retiring from the contest.

Mr. Cardwell now opened the book and read as follows.

1. All necessary points of Christian doctrine were both taught and believed by Christians before any part of the New Testament was written.

2. All the necessary points of faith were by Christ's institution to have been conveyed to succeeding ages, although the books of the New Testament had never been composed.

3. The Holy Scripture no where tells us plainly that it contains the whole belief of the first Christians, or that all necessary points of faith are plain in it.

4. It does not evidently appear that the Holy Scripture has as yet ever been the only rule of any man's belief.

5. It is an undoubted fact, that those who own no other rule of Christian faith and worship besides plain Scripture, when they are once in power, will not easily grant the same liberty to others, by which they became a body themselves, but even disallow a free and unbiassed study of the Holy Scriptures.

6. There is such an alloy of obscurity in the Sacred Writings that they could not bring all to the same faith, worship and communion, who desired to be directed by Scripture alone.

7. To say that the Scripture alone is the rule of faith, is only a genteel way of appealing to a man's own judgment from that of all mankind.

8. Nothing was ever the subject of greater disputes, or is less fit to unite Christians at present than the sense of Scripture alone.

9. All necessary points of christianity cannot be drawn from Scripture alone.

10. The apostles and evangelists did not write the New Testament with this design, that it might be a complete rule of the faith and worship of christians.

11. The Scripture itself recommends apostolical traditions.

12. The Scripture itself also recommends Church authority.

The learned author illustrates these twelve formidable propositions with such a blaze of evidence, and establishes them by such a weight of solid argument, as ought to open the eyes and reform the prejudices of the most superstitious Bible-man; and then draws, from his well established premises, this fair and legitimate conclusion: SCRIPTURE IS NOT THE WHOLE AND ONLY RULE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

The three first propositions are so undeniable, that no one who knows, when the Scriptures were written, and what they contain, can seriously contest them. It is an abuse of reasoning to oppose to the third proposition, as Protestant divines are apt to do with a shew of confidence, those words of St. Paul, that the Old Testament was able to make Timothy wise to salvation; or that all Scrip-

ture is profitable for doctrine, &c. Their first argument would prove that the New Testament is superfluous: the second that even the epistle to Timothy would be *sufficient.* Their argument has no force till they prove that what *is profitable* for doctrine, is *sufficient* for doctrine. As to the fourth, I ask one question: Where is the Bible-man who had no religion before he read the Bible; or whose reading was not attended with the influence of other instruction? Where is the Bible-man who observes the letter of the Bible concerning the observation of the sabbath, the washing of feet, obeying the Church, holding fast the traditions, possessing money, or a purse, or two garments, or calling others or permitting others to call him master, and twenty other things? All the penal laws that have ever been enacted, as well as those which still so heavily oppress us, bear witness to the fifth. Whenever I hear a Bible maniac deny the sixth proposition, I take it for granted, that he does not know that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, a language difficult from its antiquity and want of copiousness, and the New Testament in Greek, not perfectly easy from its complexity; and that he has never seen the shelves of a library bending under the weight of folio explanations of scriptural difficulties. Neither can I, except at the expense of his understanding, suppose that he has read in St. Peter,

that in St. Paul's epistles "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do *also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.*" 2 Ep. iii. 16. Every Protestant enthusiast clearly exemplifies the seventh and eighth propositions. The ninth is clear from this striking fact. All agree that a belief in the authenticity and divine inspiration of the Scriptures is a necessary point of Christian belief. But these points cannot be proved from the Bible alone. The tenth proposition is indeed conjectural; but is fully proved from the motives, the occasions, the plan and the contents of these sacred writings. In the ninth and tenth propositions repose the strength, the glory, the truth and security of the Catholic rule of faith, and the Catholic religion. Scripture recommends apostolical traditions. Scripture recommends Church authority. I forbear the well known texts: but we retain these traditions. We submit to this authority. We, in conjunction with the Catholics of the first, and all succeeding ages, follow these sacred injunctions of our Lord and his apostles. We use the Scriptures, but abuse them not. We reverence them with a religious deference; but not with the superstitious and almost idolatrous homage of Protestant fanatics. Hence we have all the advantages of your rule of faith, without its delusions and absurdities. The word of God, written and

unwritten, and conveyed to us from its source, through the medium of that church, which Christ established to teach us, and which he commanded us to hear, is our rule of faith: a rule which is at once clear, adequate, immutable, and catholic—the cause of our unchangeableness, the basis of our security, our comforts and our hopes.

But, Gentlemen, I must reserve the sequel of our conversation for another opportunity

I am, &c. JOHN HARDMAN.

ANECDOTE.

A Chinese barber, who had embraced the christian religion, passing along the streets, found a purse which contained twenty pieces of gold. He immediately looked about to see if any person was in search of it, and perceiving a gentleman at some distance, ran after him, calling him as he went; and as soon as he overtook him, asked him if he had not lost something. The gentleman examined, and not finding his purse cried out, "I have lost twenty pieces of gold." "Don't make yourself uneasy," replied the barber, "here is your purse, and all that it contained is safe." The gentleman recovering himself from his alarm, appeared struck with astonishment at meeting with such honesty in a person of so low a rank in life; and asked

him his name, place of abode, and his profession. "It can be of little consequence to you," replied the barber, to know who I am; let it suffice if I tell you that I am a christian, and one of those who profess to follow the holy law, which forbids us not only to steal privately what is concealed in another's house, but even to keep that which we may happen to find, if it be possible to discover the lawful owner."—The purity of the christian morality, thus explained and exemplified by a man so much his inferior in rank and education, made so powerful an impression upon the mind of the gentleman, that he repaired immediately to one of the churches belonging to the christians to apply for instruction in the mysteries of our holy faith.

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH.

LETTER IV.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, *in a* Series of Letters, &c. &c. &c.

1. Mr. Hardman's Reflections and Objections. 2. Delusion of Protestants. 3. Who do not follow the Bible alone. 4. But admit a Church Authority.

Kirkham, April 25, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

Mr. Cardwell's discourse made a deeper impression on my mind, than I was at first willing to avow. I could not help considering your writings as weak and untenable, and his arguments as sound and solid truths. At the same time, I felt with pain, that his remarks, though distinguished by sound sense, were quite at variance with all my preconceived notions and habits of thinking on the subject of religion. I opposed to him all those passages of your pamphlet which I

thought best adapted to refute Popery, and establish our religious tenets. To my surprise, I found that all my objections were as familiar to him, as his arguments were new to me. They neither excited his surprise by their novelty, nor shook his confidence by their weight, but received a prompt and satisfactory reply. As his discourse advanced, I could perceive my knowledge increase, and my prejudices vanish. What, said I to myself, are things really so? Are we Protestants the sport of artful teachers? Is Luther's glorious reformation to be classed with the heresies and schisms of ancient times; differing from them only in this, that whereas theirs were ancient reformations, ours is a modern one; theirs reached only to a few speculative points, whereas ours embraces so many new opinions? No wonder that, notwithstanding all our abuses and illiberality, the well-instructed Papist remains satisfied with the stability of his own faith, and feels little partiality or reverence for our ever changing and unsettled opinions. I found to my astonishment, that the Papists have surer grounds for their faith, than I had been aware of: that they love and respect the Bible at least as much as we do: but that their respect for the Bible makes them religiously fearful of profaning its sacredness by false or foolish interpretations, which are so common among us; and checking their cu-

riosity, presumption, and pride, teaches them the humility and wisdom to prefer the sense of the majority of Christians, to their own individual blunders and conceits. This is just as things should be. For, the opinion of the majority of Christians all over the world, has a better chance of being right, than the opinion of a presumptuous individual. Surely, if this be Popery, it is not so odious and absurd as we are taught to believe: but so far, at least, is innocent, rational, wise, and pious. Besides, if the Bible was not the original and primitive rule of faith, why should it be so now? Has Luther, or any other person ten times wiser and better than Luther, authority to introduce a change of so great moment, as to abolish the primitive rule of faith, which leads to unity, and to substitute a new one, which has caused, but cannot cure, so much disorderly discord and confusion? I am really of Mr. Cardwell's opinion, that to tell every blockhead to gather his religion from the Bible, is only giving a receipt how to make as many religions, as there are bungling expositors of the Holy Scripture.—It cannot be denied that private judgment, blundering over the Bible, has, since the reformation, produced at least a hundred different religions in this island alone. Now as true religion is one, ninety-nine of these new biblical religions must be false. It is equally undeniable, that the Roman Catholic Church is the

most ancient and most numerous of all others. It professes never to change, or to have changed its faith, from the time of the Apostles. Its very name is Catholic, not Protestant. Its communion shows men and women of the most exemplary piety, and claims, all the ancient saints, even all those of our own calender, save one. It is acknowledged by some of the best and wisest Protestant divines, both at home and abroad, to be a true Church. This is seriously denied by none but fools and fanatics. If then we speak without prejudice and passion, ought we not to admit, that there is a great appearance of truth in what Mr. Sherburn told one of our clergymen the other day, that there are ninety-nine chances to one, that the very best of the new biblical religions is false; and ninety-nine chances in a hundred, that his ancient Church is the true one. Truly this is as plain as an operation in the Rule of Three. But if it be true, that the noisy professions of our divines about following the Bible alone, be all a joke; if it be true, that while they profess to be guided by it, they artfully make it say what they please; and most of all, if it be true, that their interpretations are influenced by human authority, at the very moment when they disclaim all deference to any authority but that of the Bible, then we are dupes, the playthings of artful or deluded teachers. We in fact admit an authority, which in words we

disavow ; and in practice are necessitated to follow a popish rule, without either its plausibility, its consistency, or security. There appears to be some anomaly in this; something that shuns the light. If we follow authority, why not follow authority of the most ancient, the most numerous, and most consistent body of Christians in the world ? There is something wrong here. Is it, that the doctrines which I have been taught are too new, and that our faith is not quite as sound as it should be ?

Such, Gentlemen, was the frame of mind in which I began to consider the main controversy between the ancient Church and the modern one. But keeping these reflections to myself, and desirous of hearing what further observations Mr. Cardwell had to offer, I again had recourse to your pamphlet, and with diminished confidence in my auxiliary, returned to the charge. Some of your twelve propositions, said I to Mr. Cardwell, are sensible and just; but others appear to stand in need of proof. Pardon me if I cannot admit the fourth proposition, which says that "the Scripture has never been the only rule of any man's belief;" since it is the sole rule of Protestants, Presbyterians, Calvinists, Methodists, Anabaptists, Unitarians, and all sorts of Dissenters:—nor the fifth, which tells us that "those who own no other rule than plain Scripture, disallow a free and unbiassed

study of the Holy Scripture; since we all subscribe to the Bible Society, whose object is to furnish every man, woman, and child, with the Bible, without note or comment:"— nor the seventh, which asserts, that "to call the Scripture alone the rule of faith, is only a genteel way of appealing to a man's own judgment." I consider this assertion as nearer akin to the language of party, than of truth.

2. Mr. Cardwell smiled at my objections. Dr. Hawarden's twelve propositions, said he, are so many axioms of truth. They have been established in the most satisfactory manner, both by that learned author, and many other Catholic writers. To prove each of them separately, would be a very easy matter. It would require only the trouble of reading his 'Rule of Faith truly stated.' Conviction would be the result of its perusal. As you desire further information on these points, I will lend you the book, which you may read at your leisure. I know indeed that Protestants, though they are ever talking of unlimited freedom of inquiry, seldom look into a popish book. They commonly start from it, as they would from prison or infection. In this they resemble certain ancient bigots, who stopped all enquiry by this disdainful question: "What good can come from Nazareth?" For this reason they are commonly better acquainted with the paganism of China

or Hindostan, than with the doctrines of Catholicity. This aversion to learn our doctrines from those who know them best, accounts in some measure for the extreme ignorance, the childish prejudices, the silly contempt, and groundless animosity, which many staunch Protestants betray with regard to our religion. This book you may read without any apprehension of mischief. It will reward your labour, Sir, though I thought it superfluous to prove gravely points which appear to me so plain and undebateable, I am ready to comply with your wishes. Let me only in the first place assure you, that the three propositions to which you object, are as easily demonstrated as any proposition in Euclid: and that there is no need of many words, nor does it require much gravity of reasoning or solemnity of countenance, to prove truths so evident. It is surprising to to see on what weak foundations the strongest Protestant prejudices are commonly built. It is still more surprising, to see how easily you are duped, where you are least aware of illusion or deceit. You seem little sensible of the tricks which are put on your unsuspecting credulity. Why, Sir, you no more make the Bible the sole rule of your faith than I do. Your catechism, your prayer-book, sermons, conversation, and example, claim at least one half. You are no more allowed freely to cull your religion from the Bible, than I am.

For unless you happen to collect from it a prescribed set of opinions, you immediately come within the restrictive influence of penal laws. You admit an interpretative authority almost as much as we do; and let me say it, a human authority much more. There is, however, this difference between us. We openly avow it: you deceitfully disclaim it in words, while you artfully admit it in reality. But of these assertions I will vary my mode of proof. Instead of gravely producing any arguments of our own, I will give you the words of well informed writers of your own communion, who have honestly and ingeniously admitted what I assert. Sir Richard Steele, in his Letter to Pope Clement XI. fairly, though humorously, tells the plain truth to his Holiness. His words are these:

"There is no other difference between us but this one, viz. that you (Catholics) *cannot err* in any thing you determine, and we *never do:* that is, in other words, that you are *infallible*, and we are always *in the right.* We cannot but esteem the advantage to be exceedingly on our side in this case; because we have all the benefits of infallibility, without the absurdity of pretending to it; and without the uneasy task of maintaining a point so shocking to the understanding of mankind. And you must pardon us, if we cannot help thinking it to be as great and as glorious a privilege in us, to be always in the right with-

out the pretence to infallibility, as it can be to you, to be always in the wrong with it.

"Thus the Synod of Dort, in Holland, for whose unerring decisions public thanks to Almighty God are every three years offered up, with the greatest solemnity, by the magistrates in that country; the Councils of the Reformed in France; the Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland; and, if I may presume to name it, the Convocation of England, have been all found to have the very same unquestionable authority, which your Church claims solely upon the infallibility which resides in it, and the people to be under the very same strict obligation of obedience to their determinations, which with you is the consequence only of an absolute infallibility. The reason therefore, why we do not openly set up an infallibility is, that we can do without it. Authority results as well from power as from right: and a majority of votes is as strong a foundation for it as infallibility itself.

With us, "Councils that *may* err, never *do:* and besides being composed of men, whose peculiar business it is to be in the right, it is very immodest for any private person to think them not so: because this is to set up a private corrupted understanding above a public uncorrupted judgment. Thus it is in the North, as well as the South: abroad, as well as at home. All maintain the exercise of the same authority in themselves, which

yet they know not how so much as to speak of without ridicule in others.

"In England, it stands thus. The Synod of Dort is of no weight. It determines many things wrong. The Assembly of Scotland hath nothing of a true authority, and is very much out in its scheme of doctrines, worship, and government. But the Church of England is vested with all authority, and justly challengeth obedience.

"If one crosses the river in the North, there it stands thus. The Church of England is not enough reformed. Its doctrine, worship, and government, have too much of Antichristian Rome in them. But the Kirk of Scotland hath a divine right from its only head Jesus Christ, to meet and to enact what to them shall seem fit, for the good of his Church.—Calvin and the Gospel go hand in hand, as if there was not a hair's breadth between them. In Scotland, let a man depart an inch from the Confession of Faith and rule of worship established by the Assembly, and he will quickly find, that as cold a country as it is, it will be too hot for him.

"We have found out a way unknown to your Holiness and your predecessors, of claiming all the rights that belong to infallibility, even while we exclaim and abjure the thing itself. We have a right to separate from you: but no persons living have a right to differ or separate from us. We make no

scruple to resemble you in our defences of ourselves, whenever we think proper.

"And as I observed before, that there was no need for your pretending to infallibility: that it is better taken in the world, and as easy to establish the same authority without it; so here it will be obvious to those of your Church to observe, that there was no manner of necessity upon them to discard the Scriptures, as a rule of Faith open to all Christians, and to set up the Church in distinction to them; because they may see plainly now, that the same feats are to be performed, and with more decency, though not with more consistency, of which few are judges, without carrying things to such extremity. For at the same time that we are warmly contending against your disputants, for the right of the people to search and consider the Gospel themselves, it is but taking care in some other of our controversies to fix it upon them, that they may not abuse this right; that they must not pretend to be wiser than their superiors; that they must take care to understand particular texts as the Church understands them, and as their guides who have an *interpretative authority*, understand them.

"This we find to be as effectual with many as taking the Scriptures out of their hands. And because it is done in this gentleman-like manner, and gives them an opportunity of shewing their humility, it passeth very smooth-

ly off; without their considering the absurdity it leads to, that as our doctors differ, and councils too, this method layeth a necessity upon two different men, nay upon the same man in different circumstances, to understand the same text in two different, and often in two contrary senses.

"And here again, with submission to your Holiness, I think we greatly surpass you in our conduct. For we have the same definitive authority which you have, without the reproach of depreciating the word of God: the people all the while being fully satisfied that we allow the Scripture to be their rule. *And we do indeed in words preserve all authority to the Scripture; but with great dexterity we substitute, in fact, our own explanations, and doctrines drawn from those explanations, instead of it.* And then one great privilege we enjoy above you: that every particular pastor amongst us is vested with the plenary authority of an Ambassador from God; very much different from the maxims of your Church.—But the noisy make most noise every where, and few can contradict them."

3. There is as much truth as wit in these observation of the 'Spectator,' Sir Richard Steele. I do not mean to insinuate, that they prove you to be mere Bible-puppets, who move only as the wires are directed by the hands of the performer. But I do not hesitate to affirm, that they distinctly prove three

things: first, that the Bible is not your only rule of faith, even when you are unconscious of being under the direction of any other; secondly, that in discarding the venerable guidance of the Catholics, or, as your Presbyterian friend terms it, the idolatrous and Antichristian Church, you have only exchanged a stable and secure authority, for one less stable and secure: and thirdly, that while you deride and condemn the Papist rule, you cannot do well without it yourselves, but with an inconsistency that excites our ridicule or pity, you prefer the modern and usurped authority of a few heterodox teachers, in one small island, to the divine authority of the Universal Church. Regardless of your canting declamation and hypocritical clamour about Protestant liberty and Popish slavery, about the Bible on the one hand, and Antichrist on the other, a very little penetration discovers to us the real point of difference between us. It just amounts to this. Your teachers say: Hear us: follow us. Ours say, HEAR THE CHURCH. In the common affairs of life, when you want instruction and counsel, prudence bids you follow the best: and to do you justice, Mr. Hardman, in ordinary matters you are sufficiently acute and sensible. Tell me why, in your late alarming illness, you entrusted your life to the skill of the regular physician, rather than to the confident ignorance of the quack; and I will tell you why,

in a concern of much greater importance than bodily health, I repose greater confidence in the Church of God, than in any inferior authority. A word is sufficient to the wise. I do not shut out the light of day, to study by the light of a candle.

But still you persist that the Bible is the only rule of Protestants, Presbyterians, Calvinists, Methodists, Unitarians and the rest: and, that as such, they all subscribe to the Bible Society. Strange indeed;—birds of a feather flock together. How then does it happen, that while you all profess to follow the same track, some of you wing your devious flight to the North, others to the South; some to the East or West, and others to every point of the heretical compass? If you all follow the same rule of faith, why do you disagree? Why have so many meeting houses of the different mushroom sects lately sprung up round our parish church; which your Catholic ancestors, as well as mine, contributed to build above a hundred years before there was a Protestant in the world? With fair play, you could not draw such different conclusions from the same premises. Does the Bible say one thing at Kirkham, another at Treals, and quite the reverse at Rossiere and Wardless? In this diversity of pretended Bible religions, is it the Bible that leads you, or you lead the Bible? All sects spring up from delusion and enthusiasm, appealing not

so much to the Bible, as to their own construction of the Bible. By this process they form a new system to their taste. If this system has the fortune to subsist and prosper for a while, the enthusiasm evaporates, and the ferment subsides. This is quite natural. You may observe a close analogy in uncorking a bottle of small beer. Pardon the comparison; it is homely, but apposite. It fumes and foams, and sparkles at first, but soon subsides and grows vapid. As the sect loses its fervour, it loses its attraction, and begins to feel the attacks of some newly-excited enthusiasm. The newest meeting house absorbs the enthusiasm of the parish; and leaves the most ancient ones nearly empty. Without having an awkward and surreptitious recourse to the arsenal of Catholicity, it has, in this state, no *spiritual* armour for self-defence, but such as the new-fashioned sect has an equal right to employ in hostility against it. Supported by its own sense of the Scripture, one enthusiastic sect thus makes reprisals on another, and supplants it, to be supported in its turn. This is the abridged history of all the sects that have pretended to spring from, and be guided by, the Bible alone. Alone, the Bible never did, and never could support any sect long. Every Bible sect in its turn, though it execrated with all the acrimony of sectarian devotion, the Catholic principle of a living definitive authority, which keeps us

in union, harmony and peace, has soon found the necessity of resorting either openly, or what is the same thing to my argument, secretly, to other authority than the Bible. What they blamed, and, like your Calvinistic elder, still blame us for doing; with an inconsistency, not at all incompatible with Bible-mania, they have soon been obliged to do themselves. During all this ridiculous and disgraceful farce, they inveigh against the authority of the Catholic Church; and still affect to follow nothing but the Bible. Is this glaring inconsistency to be ascribed to fanaticism or hypocrisy? Certain it is, that it has opened the eyes of many Protestants, and has led them to peace and happiness in the bosom of the Catholic Church. If you be sincere, you cannot deem submission to testimonial and dignified authority, a crime in us, which you esteem a virtue of necessity among yourselves. Either forbear to imitate, or withhold your censure.

Our Church has stood the test of eighteen centuries. She has had the benefit of long experience in observing the origin, the progress, and extinction of a great variety of sects. Independenly of the divine institution, she has, during this long lapse of ages, had ample means of seeing the necessity of a living and speaking authority, to interpret the silent and dead letter of the Bible, in the numerous abortive attempts of fanaticism to fol-

low Scripture alone. She is true to her doctrine, and consistent with herself. Compared with her apostolic antiquity, your reformation is yet young. But the damsel does begin to have a little experience. Though she began her diminutive career by coquetting with the Bible, she was soon admonished, and is now convinced of the dangers of such profane familiarity. We consider her as the fairest of her family, and the least deformed, because reformed the least: yet many others, with the Bible in their hands, have always thought that she was too much *clad in scarlet.* To us who are impartial, but not indifferent observers of her struggles with her younger sisters, it is curious, if not amusing, to see how easily she can accommodate her looks and language to the occasion. When she speaks to us, her language is: No Church authority; no traditions. O no, nothing but the Bible. When she is engaged with them, she finds that the Bible alone will not serve her turn. It is natural that the afflicted parent should rebuke her daughter, for first leading them astray by her bad example; and that the sisters should with insults ask her, how she can expect them to submit to her, when her own disobedience has taught them to despise their mother?

4. This is not an imaginary representation. It might be tedious at present to illustrate the subject by Catholic evidence. What our

divines therefore have written with a clearness and energy of reasoning worthy of the truth which they defend, to shew the farcical duplicity of your language and mode of proceeding; to shew that you *protest* against, or what you will remember is the same thing, *disbelieve* your own principles as well as ours; and to shew that you are compelled to press some other rule into your service, as an indispensable auxiliary to the Bible, I shall pass over at this late hour of the evening; and according to promise will limit my quotations to the text of the Acts of your own Apostles. They speak from the tripod; as Sir Richard does from observation. The first of these Apostles is Henry VIII. How far he resembled our first Apostles Peter and Paul, in his character, his ministry, and the motives of his zeal, is pretty well understood. He gave the Bible to his converts; told them that it was the only avenue to the truth; and assured them from his own comfortable experience, that it was as easy to understand, as that fourpence made a groat. But in a few years, viz. 1541, this Supreme Head of the Church tells the Parliament, that many tares grew up in his field among the corn: and two years afterwards prefixed this preamble to an Act for the advancement of true religion, and abolishment of the contrary: "Whereas many seditious and ignorant people have abused the liberty granted them for reading the Bible,

and great diversity of opinions, animosities, tumults and schisms have been occasioned by perverting the sense of the Scripture; to retrieve the mischiefs arising from thence, it is enacted, that a certain form of orthodox doctrine, consonant to the inspired writings, *and the doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, shall be set forth as a standard of belief;* that Tindal's false translation of the Old and New Testament, and all other books touching religion in the English tongue, contrary to the (six) Articles of Faith, or that Summary of Doctrine published by the King, in 1540, or any time after, shall be suppressed, and forbidden to be read in the King's Dominions—and that the reading the Bible is likewise prohibited, to all under the degrees of Gentlemen and Gentlewomen!" *Statutes at Large*, 34 Hen. VIII. Chap. I.*

* On the 4th of November, 1547, in his last dying speech to Parliament, after complaining of a great lack of charity, that the clergy taught one contrary to another, that almost all men were in variety and discord, and that there was little or no preaching truly and sincerely the word of God, his Majesty proceeds: "You of the Clergy—amend these crimes, I exhort you, and set out God's word, both by true preaching and good example giving; or else I, whom God hath appointed his Vicar, and High Minister here, will see these divisions extinct, and these enormities corrected, according to my very duty. Although I say the spiritual men be in some fault, that charity is not kept among you, yet you of the temporalty be not clear and unspotted of malice and en-

The next of your Apostles whose testimony I shall cite is Queen Elizabeth. She had been Supreme head of your Church eight and twenty years, when she gave the following demonstrations of her experience and vi-

---

vy; for you rail at Bishops, speak scandalously of Priests, and rebuke and taunt preachers, both contrary to good order and Christian fraternity. If you know surely that a Bishop or Preacher erreth, or teacheth perverse doctrine, come and declare it to some of our Council, *or to us, to whom is committed by God, the High Authority, to reform and order such causes and behaviours; and be not judges yourselves, of your fantastic opinions, and vain expositions: for in such High causes, you may lightly err.* And although you be permitted to read Holy Scripture, and to have the Word of God in your Mother-Tongue, you must understand, it is licensed you so to do, only to inform your own consciences, and instruct your children and family; and not to dispute and make Scripture a railling and taunting stock, against Priests and Preachers, as many light persons do. I am very sorry to know and hear, how unreverendly that most precious jewel the Word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled, in every alehouse and tavern, contrary to the true meaning and doctrine of the same: and yet I am even as much sorry, that the readers of the same, follow it, in doing it, so faintly and coldly. For of this I am sure, that charity was never so faint among you, and virtuous and godly living was never less used, nor God himself, amongst Christians, was never less reverenced, honoured, and served. Therefore, as I said before, be in charity one with another, like brother and brother love; dread and fear God; to which I, as your Supreme Head, and Sovereign Lord, exhort and require you." (*Hall's Chronicle, Fol.* cclxi.)

gour in the discharge of this arduous office. In her speech to parliament, March 29th, 1582, she says: "There be some fault-finders with the order of the Clergy, which so make a slander to myself and the Church, *whose over-ruler God hath made me: whose negligence cannot be excused, if any schisms or errors heretical were suffered.* Some faults and negligences may be, as in all other great changes it happeneth; and what vocation without? All which, if you my Lords of the Clergy do not amend, I mean to depose you. Look ye therefore well to your charges. This may be amendment without heedless or open exclamations. I am supposed to have many studies, but most philosophical. I must yield this to be true, that I suppose few (that be no professors) have read more. And I need not tell you, that I am so simple that I understand not, nor so forgetful that I remember not; and yet amidst my many volumes I hope God's book hath not been my seldomest lectures. Take you heed. I see many overbold with God Almighty, making too many subtle scannings of his blessed will, as lawyers do with human testaments. The presumption is so great, as I may not suffer it (yet mind I not hereby to animate Romanists—nor tolerate new-fangledness: I mean to guide them both by God's holy true rule.") (*Parliamentary History, Vol. IV. p.* 278.) To show how much she was in earnest, this hypocritical

murderer, soon after the delivery of this speech, sent Mary, Queen of Scotland to the block; and cemented her own new-fangledness by the blood of a Catholic princess, and of great numbers of the Catholic clergy.

I shall at present make no remarks to the conceited vanity, the arrogant presumption, and outrageous tyranny of these regal patentees of ecclesiastical supremacy and interpretational authority; nor of the violent means which they employed to convince others that they were not to be judges themselves of their fantastic opinions, in which they might lightly err. My object is to shew, how easily your church was admonished, that in spite of your vain pretensions, the Bible alone was not a sufficient guide; and that the necessity of an Ecclesiastical Supremacy was asserted and enforced by your church from its infancy. I could easily adduce a thousand instances of the same systematic contradiction between your professions and practice, from a succession of Protestant theologians of all denominations, both at home and abroad. But these two testimonies, in conjunction with the well-pointed satire of Sir Richard Steele, are sufficient for my purpose. They prove that you do not follow the Bible alone. They prove that the cry of the Bible alone is unsincere; that it is resorted to only to divert the attention of simple Protestants from the solid grounds of Catholic truth; and to hold out a

lure to decoy the ignorant and the unwary. And they distinctly prove that when you withdrew your obedience from the apostolic authority of the ancient church, you only put on your necks the galling yoke of a new and more than pontifical supremacy of your own creation. It is therefore an undeniable truth, that neither you, nor we, nor any others that I ever heard or read of, are solely guided by the Bible. All admit another conjunct authority, though we alone are sincere enough to avow it. Sincerity looks well in such circumstances.

Others read the Bible as well as you. They are equally sincere, and by no means your inferiors in penetration and learning. The result of their perusal is perhaps a conviction that your opinions, though honoured by regal and parliamentary approbation, and sanctioned by the encouragement of worldly wealth, and a formidable apparatus of penal restrictions, are unsound, erroneous, antiscriptural and untenable. Perhaps for one text which you quote in favour of your opinions, they quote ten against them. This is neither impossible, nor unprecedented. What is to be done in this case, where the Bible is itself silent, and doctors disagree? Here the Bible fails you in your utmost need: and without some other expedient, religion would be anarchical, and controversy endless. In this extremity you begin to learn from experience,

what you ought to have learnt from the original and long continued testimony of our church; that some living authority is as necessary to decide religious controversies in the church, as it is in the state to decide suits in common law. Having swerved from the doctrine and practice of venerable antiquity, you are at last compelled either to revert to the ancient rule, or to contrive some new institutions of your own. The Bible is here quite out of the question. The meaning of the Bible is the matter in dispute. The Bible cannot speak to interpret itself. Hence you adopted as a matter of course, articles as a standard of belief, ecclesiastical courts, judges and juries, penal enactments and coercive machinery, to enforce the adoption not of the Bible itself, but of your construction of the Bible. With these shuffling tricks you play off the Biblical game.

Open your eyes, Mr. Hardman, and consider this matter with the coolness of reason, and not with the delusion of prejudice or passion. Perhaps you will then perceive that, authority being admitted on all sides, the real difference between a Protestant and a Catholic consists not in this, that the former follows the Bible, and the latter the authority of his church; but is reduced to this simple question: Whether the Catholic or the Protestant follows the best and most competent authority? Whether the opinions of the mino-

rity ought to preponderate over the faith of the majority of Christians; the modern authority over the ancient; the changeable over the unchangeable; the insular over the catholic; the local over the universal; and, as we judge, the human over the divine? Whether the Dutchman follows the best authority who bows to the decision of the Synod of Dort; the Scotchman who adopts the confession of Cromwell's divines, and the terminations of the General Assembly at Edinburgh; the Quaker who follows his own private spirit, under the direction of the meeting; the Methodist who obeys the conference at Leeds or Manchester; the Englishman who appeals to the Su—y of the Cr—n, resting on the head of a man, woman, or child; or the Catholic, who with the majority of Christians, of all ages and countries, despising the conceits and innovating experiments of unauthorised individuals, prefers the fixed, unchangeable, and divinely appointed authority of Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. You have taken your choice; and we have taken ours. Which of us is most justified in his preference, by the rule of wisdom, humility, faith, and piety? We can give the most substantial reasons for preferring the authority of him who said, before a page of the New Testament was written: "Hear the Church;" to that of a wicked tyrant who chooses to usurp the infallibility of apostleship, and set

forth his own new fangled system of doctrine as a standard of Christian belief. The instructed Catholic has surer grounds for his belief; and better motives for his practice. The authority will be followed in matters of faith is not illusory, but infallible; not human, but divine.

Gentlemen, the additional reflections of Mr. Cardwell shall form the subject of my next letter.

I am, &c. JOHN HARDMAN.

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH.

LETTER V.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, *in a* Series of Letters, &c. &c. &c.

1. Sentiments of Protestants on the Tendency of Bible Societies 3. Speeches of the last Catholic Archbishop of York, and the last Catholic Bishop of Chester, in Parliament.

Kirkham, May 24, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

These arguments of Mr. Cardwell are, in my estimation, sound, sensible, and unanswerable. They shew clearly, that no sect of Protestants follows the Bible alone; and that our pertinacious clamours on this subject are sometimes indeed the outcry of fanatical delusion, but more commonly the language of prejudice, artifice, or insincerity. They further shew, with a clearness which could neither honestly palliate nor sincerely deny these five things. First, that the Cath-

olics truly venerate the Bible, and piously use it for their instruction, their comfort, and consolation. Secondly, that they lay no restrictions and prescribe no limitations on the perusal of it, but such as reason, faith, and piety recommend. Thirdly, that if we except enthusiasts, whose eccentricities are no rule to the sobermindedness of faith, all Protestants do admit a church authority in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, no less than the Catholics. Fourthly, that the question at issue between the Catholic Church and Protestantism is not, as your pamphlet boldly asserts, that the Protestant follows the Bible, and no other authority than the Bible; while the Catholic despises and degrades the Bible to follow human authority. And therefore, fifthly, as all churches do in fact and necessarily admit authority, the real question at issue between them is, what church authority is most authentic, most competent, most consistent, most secure. It is to ascertain whether, in all these respects, the Catholic Church, or the very best of all the Protestant churches, be preferable. It is to decide, whether the ancient church, or modern institutions; whether the unchangeable Church, or ever changing sects; whether the Universal Church, or local heresies; whether the the Apostolic Church, or Luther's substitutes be authorised by heaven, and best qualified to direct the faith, and give security to the con-

sciences of sincere Christians in the way of truth and salvation. This is, or ought to be the substantial object of enquiry, the real subject of discussion between us.

And really Gentlemen, I frankly confess, that the weighty arguments of my friend Mr. Cardwell have made a deep impression on my mind. They have dissipated some of my most inveterate prejudices, enlarged my knowledge, and qualified my mind to form a more correct judgment on the Rule of Faith, and on the respective claims of the Catholic Church and her competitors to be regarded as the true Church of Christ. They have persuaded me that the Catholic is not that ignorant, foolish, and Bible-hating creature, who, according to your representation, prefers the opinions of men to the express word of God, and who can give no reason why he believes this, or practises that, but that he has at least plausible motives for his partiality and preference, and "is ready always to give an answer to every man, that asketh him a a reason of the hope that is in him."

1. Desirous of still prolonging our conversation, I made some observations on Mr. Cardwell's arguments. I regard not, said I, the opinions or complaints of Henry VIII. or Queen Elizabeth, respecting the abuses which sprung from an injudicious reading of the Bible. I despise the tyrannical statutes of those ecclesiastical despots. They lived in

the ferment of the Reformation, before men's minds were settled, and before correct notions prevailed. We live in an enlightened age. The harmlessness, the utility, the obligation and necessity of all men reading the Bible, are now universally admitted. All parties emulate each other in promoting the efforts of the Bible Society to furnish every individual with the pure rule of divine truth, undebased by the notes and comments of fallible men. They all consider this is the surest, the only way to disseminate religious truth. None can contest the wisdom and policy of their institution, but those whose opinions are at variance with the Scripture.

Mr. Cardwell resumed,—I turned your attention to the two first heads of your Church, Henry VIII. and his daughter, both to point out the date of its origin, and to show you how sternly your church was admonished, in her earliest infancy, that the Bible alone was not sufficient either to fix her faith, or preserve her existence. But she had been admonished of the same truth in every succeeding generation, by the voice of her prelates, the zeal of her clergy, and the authority of the legislature. This I could easily substantiate, by a reference to the writings of your divines, the proceedings of Convocations, the decisions in the ecclesiastical courts, and various parts of the statute books. But these I shall omit, and come at once to what is

passing before our own eyes. If it be a scandal to assert, that the Bible ought to be read with some precaution; and that its operation on ignorant and fanatical minds is more likely to prove hurtful than beneficial, your church must now be content to take its share of the reproach. The Bible Society, which originated about thirteen years ago among the Dissenters, and was subsequently encouraged by the patronage and wealth of many distinguished members of your communion, has within these few years excited much attention, and voluminous discussion. The result is remarkable. It has spread a serious alarm among the watchmen of your Holy City. It has taught them the necessity of changing their language. It has led them to abandon their once favourite and fanatical outcry of the Bible alone, with which they were wont to insult and triumph over Popery, and to adopt in their turn the good sense, the language and arguments of Popery, as a shield of self-defence. The Catholic Church alone is steady in her principles, and always consistent with herself. Your clergy, Mr Hardman, though less changeable than many others, may with propriety assume for their motto:

Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.—*Changed are the times, and so are we with them.*

One of your prelates sees danger in the distribution of the Bible without the accompany-

ing interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Prayer Book, and Catechism. Others descry danger without the guidance of the Homilies, and other acrimonious tracts against Catholics and Dissenters, Nay, a few months ago the Archdeacon of Huntingdon, in his primary Visitation Charge, has given a graduated scale of the distribution of Bibles and the increase of felons, for some years past; and has proved, or at least attempted to prove, that in the same ratio that Bibles are distributed, felons increase. They tell us, that the Scriptures are full of passages hard to be understood: that it is dangerous to put them into the hands of the common people without comments: that the reading of the Scriptures by the prejudiced and the ignorant leads to schisms and heresy: "If any preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 9:) and that those who thus corporate with the Dissenters, should ponder well the words of St. John: "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." (2 John i. 10.) It is suprising, but true. In reading some of the late publications of your prelates and clergy, we almost fancy that we are reading the Catholic controvertists of former days. We find them employing against the Dissenters the same sentiments, the same arguments, and the

and New Testament, while the latter has some peculiar to itself. Its extreme conciseness, its eliptical phraseology, frequently darken the meaning, which is still further increased by Hebrew idioms, with which the Greek of the New Testament abounds. Now all these difficulties, which the learned reader must encounter in the original languages of the Old and New Testament, are faithfully transfused into our authorized version, while many others naturally spring up from the imperfection of translation. Accordingly it is only by long and severe study that men of the best understandings, enlarged by multifarious reading, can acquire an adequate knowledge of the sacred writings. . . . . The Bible ought to be approached even by the wise and learned, with an humble sense of their own limited capacities." The author then proceeds to show, that reading these sacred writings without due precautions produced a variety of mischievous sects, and even were made a pretence for rejecting the Messiah among the ancient Jews; and that the same cause produced effects equally lamentable among the primitive Christians, some of whom, says St. Paul, *wrested the scriptures to their own destruction.* "Yet these men," says our author, "who thus perverted the sense of St. Paul, and that of the other inspired writers, were cotemporaries of the Apostles, and spoke the language of the New

Testament, and Septuagint version. Asiatics themselves, they were familiar with oriental idioms and oriental images, with the figurative style, and bold amplification of eastern nations. And shall it be said that illiterate peasants, distant two thousand miles from the country, and nearly two thousand years from the age of the Apostles, will not grossly pervert the meaning of the sacred oracles, reading them without oral or written explanation, through the medium of an English version of two hundred years standing, scrupulously literal, and therefore retaining all the difficulties of the original, and superadding others?

"The experience and observation of mankind lead to the same conclusion, that the scriptures are of themselves too obscure for the generality of mankind. This the history of the Church in all ages, but particularly since the reformation, abundantly testifies.

"In opposition to the Church of Rome, the first reformers loudly asserted the right of private judgement in expounding the Scriptures . . . but anxious to emancipate the people from the authoity of the Roman Pontiff, they proclaimed it without explanation or restriction, and the consequences were dreadful. Impatient to undermine the foundation of papal jurisdiction, they maintained it without any limitation, asserting that every individual whatever had an undoubted right to explain the Scriptures for himself. The principle,

now extended too far, was no longer tenable; so that it became necessary to fortify it with another, namely, that the Bible is an easy book, level to all capacities, and that the greatest perspicuity is the necessary character of a divine revelation. But neither single nor combined, are these principles capapable of resisting any serious attack.

"The private judgement of Muncer discovered in Scripture, that titles of nobility and large estates were impious encroachments on the natural equality of the faithful, and invited his followers to examine the Scriptures, *whether these things were so.* They examined, praised God, and proceeded with fire and sword to the extirpation of the ungodly, and the seizure of their property. Private judgement also, thought it had discovered in the Bible, that established laws were standing restraints on Christian liberty, and that the elect of God were incapable of sinning. John of Leyden, laying down his thimble, and taking up his Bible, suprised the City of Munster, at the head of a rabble of frantic enthusiasts, proclaimed himself King of Zion, and took unto himself fourteen wives at once, affirming that polygamy was Christian liberty, and the privilege of the saints. But if the flagitious madness of foreign peasants, interpreting the Bible for themselves, be afflicting to the friends of humanity and rational piety, the history of England, during a considerable

part of the seventeenth century, offers little to console them. In that place and period, countless enthusiasts sprung up successively, and contemporaneously, endued with extravagant doctrines and noxious propensities, in various degrees, from the wild ravings of Fox, to the methodical madness of Barclay; from the formidable fanaticism of Cromwell, to the drivelling impiety of Praise-God-Barebones. Piety, reason, and common sense, seemed to be driven from the world, to make room for for canting jargon, religious frenzy, and fiery zeal. All quoted Scripture, all made pretensions to illuminations, visions, revelations, and illapses of the spirit; and the pretensions of all were equally well founded. The expediency of abolishing the clerical and regal functions, was strenously maintained; priests being the servants of Satan, kings the delegates of the Whore of Babylon, *and both inconsistent with the kingdom of the Redeemer*, These zealots denounced learning as a heathenish invention, and the universities as seminaries of Antichristian impiety. The sanctity of his office was no protection to the prelate; the sacredness of majesty no defence to the king; both were scoffed at, denounced, and finally murdered by merciless fanatics, whose only book was the Bible without note or comment. At this time, prayer and preaching, and *reading the Scriptures*, were at their height: every man prayed, every man preach-

ed, every man *read*, and no man listened. Scripture authority was pleaded for every atrocity. The ordinary business of life was transacted in scripture language. In scripture phrase were discussed the internal state of the nation, and its external relations. In the language of Scripture conspiracies were formed, proscriptions planned, treasons hatched, and by scripture authorities they were not only justified but consecrated. These historical facts have often astonished the good and startled the pious. Engrossed by such feelings, the reader too often overlooks their awful moral, that the Bible without note or comment is unfit for the perusal of the rude and illiterate.

"Its doctrines, never contrary to reason, are sometimes above it: its truths, generally deep, are sometimes mysterious, but always important. So that the character and matter of the sacred volume afford an additional proof of the impropriety of placing it indiscriminately in the hands of men whose minds are necessarily rude and uncultivated.

"Man must cultivate the ground for his corporeal, the mind for his intellectual food. His proficiency in every science is proportioned to the skill of his instructor, the time, the toil, and talents expended in the study of it. In literature and arts, it is the same. In every trade, occupation, and profession, manual dexterity, or intellectual excellence,

can be acquired only by previous discipline, and long habits of bodily, or mental action. But are the deep study, patient investigation, and the vigorous exercise of reason, necessary to the attainment of all human knowledge; and will the knowledge of ourselves as fallen creatures, as moral and reprehensible agents; —will the knowledge of God, of his attributes, of his will, of the doctrines he inculcates, of the duties he prescribes, of his precepts, promises, exhortations, denunciations, and of his whole scheme of redemption, will all this knowledge—deep, various, and sublime as it is,—be extracted from the bible by ignorant rustics and mechanics, unassisted by oral or written elucidation? It would be highly desirable that the peasantry of England understood and respected the laws of their country more than they do at present; yet no society has yet started up with the avowed object of dispensing among them cheap editions of Blackstone, or Coke's Littleton, without note or comment. A competent knowledge of natural philosophy, astronomy, metaphysics, and political ecomony, could not fail to humanize their minds; yet no sagacious reformer has yet come forward with a proposal for circulating among them Newton, Laplace, Locke, Smith, or Stewart, without note or comment. Why? because these books would not be read, or read to some useless or pernicious purpose. This applies with infinitely

greater force to the Bible; for as it is the best of all books, its perversion is proportionably dangerous. Beware then, how you entrust the Bible, indiscriminately, to the multitude, and then abandon them to the licentious glosses of their own wild imaginations.

"Oral instruction would be used to a considerable extent, in teaching them Christianity. Then oral instruction should be aided by summary views of the doctrines of our religion, plainly written, clearly arranged, and extracted from the Scriptures by men of sound heads and honest hearts. Interesting narratives, grounded on scripture history, written with clearness and elegance, and leading to some useful moral, or illustrating some important doctrine, should be put into their hands. Select extracts from the Scriptures themselves, with short explanatory notes, and an occasional paraphrase, may be judiciously introduced into the poor man's library. If he has the Bible, such works may guard him against the wild licentiousness of interpretation; if he has not, they may make him a meek and peaceable Christian, instead of a turbulent and dangerous enthusiast. *He cannot use, he must abuse the Bible. Trust not to his own reason, his private judgment; he has none;* or, which is sufficient for my argument, he has not enough, and therefore the Bible should not be industriously put into his hands, because it is too obscure for his rude under-

standing. This is the conclusion to which we are equally hurried, whether we consider the antiquity of the sacred writings; their figurative language; their oriental idioms; their highly diversified style; their subject matter; the important ends answered by their obscurity; the analogy of the divine dispensations; THE NUMEROUS SECTS INTO WHICH CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN RENT; the torrents of fanaticism, which have swept away civil and religious establishments, while all these sects, and all these fanatics, appeal to Scripture for a vindication of their opinions, and a justification of their atrocities.

"The bulk of mankind must be content to glean up their information from others. They cannot approach the great sources of knowledge. They must receive the most important truths, as in medicine, law, morality, physics, and mathematics, at second hand—on the authority of those who derive them from the fountain head. With respect to Christian knowledge, the same process has, in general, been observed; and where it has been departed from in any considerable degree, society has been shaken to its centre.

"The great triumphs of Christianity over Heathenism, Idolatry, and Infidelity, have been atchieved, in all ages, by PREACHING the Scripture, by expounding the Scripture, by pressing its momentous truths, with the clearness and energy of oral illustration, on the

attention of a reluctant, and unbelieving world. But no history records any considerable conquest over Heathenism or Mahometanism, by the mere instrumentality of the Bible;—a fact strongly corroborative of the position, 'that the Scriptures are hard to be understood.' The commission which the Apostles received from their Divine Master was: 'Go, PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE:' not a word about circulating the Bible with or without note or comment. And though the Scriptures were translated into various languages, in the early ages of the Christian Church, we have reason to think they were designed for the use of believers, not of unbelievers—for persons already converted to Christianity, not for those who yet remained to be converted. If the circulation of the Bible were the right mode of converting the Heathen, may we not be permitted to suppose, that, in the arrangement of Providence, the invention of printing would have preceded the promulgation of Christianity, as this circulation might thus be cheaply, easily, and rapidly effected: especially, as God could have easily annexed miraculous powers to the sacred volume, as to the persons of the Apostles. Hence it can scarcely be doubted that preaching is the appointed way for the conversion of infidels.

"In truth, it is principally because the Scriptures are very voluminous, and very

difficult, that a necessity arose of instituting a distinct order of men, prepared by long discipline, and severe study, for the important duty of collecting, exhibiting, expounding, and illustrating the doctrines and precepts of the sacred writings. But let the public be once convinced, that tinkers and draymen are qualified to search the Scriptures, to overcome their difficulties, and comprehend their doctrines, and all respect for the clerical order is at that moment at an end. In point of fact, accordingly we find that the more enthusiastic sects either have no spiritual teachers at all, or none regularly educated for the ministry. The Scriptures, they conceive, have no difficulties for *them: they* do not stand in need of human interpreters; *they* derive their knowledge from a higher and purer source than any earthly teacher. Nay some enthusiasts, soaring above their fellows, or rather arguing more correctly, have rejected the Bible itself, as unnecessary to men favoured with immediate revelation.

" But were the Bible as easy as it is difficult, still it would be a work of charity to condense its doctrines into a short and well arranged system, and spare the bewildered peasant the labour of pushing his researches through so vast a volume, and such multifarious matter, for the purpose of collecting, and arranging for himself. *It is cruel to set him adrift, in his own little bark, on the immense*

ocean of divine revelation, without star or compass to guide him. An educated man, unacquainted with revelation, may obtain a clearer view of the whole Christian scheme from a small duodecimo volume, read in a few hours, than he can from the Bible in as many months. This holds incomparably stronger with respect to the uneducated peasant: from such a work he would derive more religious knowledge in a few days, than he could from the Bible during his whole life.

"The truth is, the Bible is already too much read by Protestant peasants, and too much neglected by Protestant gentlemen. Among the latter, accordingly, we find that honour is too frequently substituted for morality, etiquette for religion, gaming for reflection, and gallantry for devotion. The Sportman's Calendar is read; the novel devoured; the play admired; the Bible merely tolerated. Thus, religious ignorance, which should only be found among the beasts that perish, rises in spite of the grossness of its nature, into the highest ranks of fashion, from which it sheds its blighting influence on all the subordinate classes. What a perverse and inconsistent being is man! Those who can understand the Bible, seldom read it, and content themselves with recommending it to those who cannot; while those to whom it is recommended, often read it with avidity, sel-

dom understand it, and generally pervert it to their own destruction!"

This sagacious observer of "the signs of times" is not afraid to avow his opinions. He thinks that the labours of the Bible Society will produce at home less fruit than is expected, or fruit in abundance, but of a poisonous quality; and will be almost unproductive abroad; that it may be fairly doubted whether their distribution of Bibles will, of itself, promote, in any sensible degree, the cause of religion and virtue. He calls upon the society to pause, and calmly reconsider their plan of religious instruction; lest instead of pure Christianity, they circulate hypocrisy, fanaticism, and impious delusion among the lower classes of society; that to instruct the ignorant, is much more difficult than to put Bibles or Testaments into their hands. "That the Bible," says he, "is adapted to the meanest understanding—an opinion taken up at first without due examination—is still retained, because men are disinclined to submit to a severe scrutiny the truth of an opinion long and fondly cherished. We think it harsh, to be called upon to renounce opinions for which our ancestors had once strenuously contended. If their opinions be right, we maintain them because they are so; if *wrong, we vindicate them still, on a principle of honour. Perhaps the spirit of opposition to Papal Rome still*

operates in some degree." "To me it appears," continues Mr. O'Callaghan, "that the immediate tendency of the Bible Society is to empty the churches and fill the conventicles; and its remote tendency, to put down the former altogether. The current of public opinion has already set in against the Established Church; and the Bible Society, whether the prelates will see it or not, is unquestionably an engine for its detruction."

The sentiments of this Protestant clergyman, expressed in the passages which I have read to you from this pamphlet, are precisely the sentiments which the Catholic Church has ever entertained. At the present day, this Catholic language is, with more confidence than consistency or prudence, pretty frequently adopted by your divines. They have at length learnt from experience what they ought to have learnt from the testimony of the Catholic Church, that the Bible alone, interpreted by private judgment, is not the way to unity, integrity, and stability of faith. They find in their own perplexities the truth of what we have always told them, that the Bible thus interpreted is the source of a continual succession of new sects and new doctrines. They are now as fully convinced, as the Fathers of the Council of Trent, that the Bible is not the sole rule of faith, nor indeed the fittest book for all sorts of readers: that the true interpretation of the Bible is not less

necessary than the letter of the Bible: that some doctrines are true, though twenty texts may be quoted against them; and some doctrines false, though twenty texts may be cited in their favour: and that the silent Bible cannot, in all cases, qualify the sincere inquirer to discriminate with certainty between religious error and religious truth. Thus the present generation of Protestants has surrendered and co-operates with us in demolishing the main principles for which their ancestors so strenuously contended; and growing sober, has at length been compelled, in opposing heresy, schism, and biblical delusion, to adopt the language and arguments which the Catholic Church has always employed against those who stray from the truth of her communion. In a Catholic, this is consistency; in a Protestant, a phenomenon. Certainly it must occur to the writers who employ this kind of reasoning, that they invariably condemn the conduct of the authors of the reformation, and overturn the very foundation on which their own Church is erected. Had Luther, Cranmer, and Jewel, entertained these rational and just sentiments, they never would have forsaken the faith and communion of the Catholic Church, to form new systems of religion according to their own partial, contracted, and often fanatical view of obscure texts, but would have continued to belong to the "One Fold and the One Shepherd."

But, Mr. Hardman, at this late hour it is time to close our discussion. This pamphlet, which you have brought to me with an air of defiance, lays itself open to many other objections, into which I forbear to enter at present. Had you applied to Mr. Sherburn, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Marsh, or any of our neighbouring priests, whose abilities and learning better qualify them for the discussion of topics of this nature, they would have given you text for text, and argument for argument; and would have triumphantly repelled every attack which you could make on our Church. In my plain and humble way, appealing rather to the observations of good sense, than to a multiplicity of obscure and disputed texts, which are too difficult for you and me, I have demolished the foundation of your pamphlet, and the fall of the superstructure follows of course. What effects the invective of this and similar pamphlets may produce on the minds of simple and wavering Protestants, who are better able to count texts of Scripture, than discover the true sense of them, I shall not pretend to determine. But I can assure you, that the faith of a Catholic is built on a foundation too solid to be shaken by volumes of textual sophistry. In spite of your groundless clamours, and uncharitable, as well as unreasonable abuse of Popery, it will ever be the Catholic's glory, delight, and comfort, *to hear that Church, which is the pil-*

lar and the ground of the truth, and to follow the Romish injunction of that Papist, St. Paul: "Brethren, stand fast, and HOLD THE TRADITIONS WHICH YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, WHETHER BY WORD, OR OUR EPISTLE."

Mr. Hardman, I have only one further observation to make, or rather to repeat. Think not that none have searched the Scriptures, but those whose faith has suffered shipwreck in the search. I love and venerate the Bible. I have perused it often. I have read some chapters of it almost daily, from my youth. In antiquity, in sublimity, in variety of beauty, in holiness, in authority, in the power of enlightening the understanding and improving the heart of the humble faithful, no other book is comparable to it. But still, independently of other considerations, the errors and delusions of every Protestant sect are to me a demonstration, that it is only then a safe and sure guide, when its obscurities are cleared up, and its true sense and meaning declared hy the unerring voice of Apostolical Tradition, and the interpretative authority of the Catholic Church.

3. My friend paused, and I replied: I thank you, Mr. Cardwell, for the pleasure which I have received from this conversation. It has done me good. It has given me abundant and interesting materials for thought and reflection. You have proved to my satisfaction, that the author of this pamplet is both

ignorant and bewildered; that he is not a member either of your church or ours; but an artful and puritanical enemy to both. You have convinced me that he is a wild interpreter of the Bible, who gives his own crude construction of insulated texts for the genuine meaning of Holy Writ. But though you have triumphantly evinced, against the main principle of our author, that the Bible is, only in a limited sense, the Rule of Faith, you have left some parts of his pamphlet untouched. What will you say to his Letters on the Supremacy of the Pope, Transubstantiation, Prayer to the Saints, or for the Dead, the Antichristian Apostacy, and the Papal Antichrist? To all these, said Mr. Cardwell, I shall at present say nothing. These may be the subject of future consideration and discussion. In fact, the Letters on these subjects contain nothing new—nothing but errors and misrepresentations as old as the age of Luther, and objections which our divines have a thousand times refuted. The arguments are all grounded on the author's ignorance of our doctrine, and his misrepresentation of the Scripture. I have already refuted them in their principle; and at the approach of midnight, you will excuse me from entering upon the easy but lengthened task of refuting them in detail.

On these miscellaneous topics I will, at present, only give you the sentiments of two

eminent English Prelates of the archdiocess and diocess in which you and I live—the Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Heath, the last Catholic Archbishop of York, and the Right Rev. Dr. Cuthbert Scott, his Suffragan, and the last Catholic Bishop of Chester. These learned and virtuous Prelates, with all the other Bishops of England in their places in the House of Lords, February 18th, 1558, the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the bill for conferring the Ecclesiastical Supremacy and the Headship of the Church, on a woman, was before the House, and the subject of warm and awful debate, unanimously and strenuously opposed the introduction of these innovations: and all the Bishops of England, except one, conscientiously and honourably sacrificed their episcopal sees and palaces, their seats in the House of Lords, their honours, their revenues, their personal comforts, and, in the case of some of them, their personal liberty, rather than exchange the sterling truths of the Catholic Creed for errors coined within their own remembrance. The speeches of the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Chester, in these debates are preserved by Strype, and inserted in the Parliamentary History. (Strype, vol. i. in Append. Parl. Hist. vol. iii. p. 379.) I was reading them when you favored me with this visit. Both are long and argumentative. I shall select

only the warning voice of our Primate, and an extract from the arguments of our Bishop.

The Archbishop of York thus warns the House of Lords: "By the relinquishing and forsaking of the See of Rome, we must forsake and fly from these four things. First, we must forsake and fly from all general Councils. Secondly, we must fly from all Canonical and Ecclesiastical Laws of the Church of Christ. Thirdly, from the judgment of all other Christians. Fourthly, and lastly, we must forsake and fly from the Unity of Christ's Church; and, by leaping out of Peter's ship, hazard ourselves to be overwhelmed and drowned in the waters of schism, sects and divisions. It is much to be lamented, that we, the inhabitants of this réalm, are much more inclined to raise up the errors and sects of ancient and condemned heretics, than to follow the approved doctrine of the most catholic and learned Fathers of Christ's Church. In the relinquishing and forsaking of that Church, as a malignant church, the inhabitants of this realm shall be forced to seek further for another gospel of Christ, other doctrine, faith and sacraments, than we hitherto have received, which shall breed such a schism and error in faith, as was never in any Christian realm; and therefore, of your wisdom's worthy consideration, and maturely to be provided for, before you pass this Act of Supremacy."

The Bishop of Chester thus argues against the same Bill: "At this present there be abroad, in Christendom, thirty-four sundry sects of opinions, whereof never one agreeth with another, and all differ from the Catholic Church. And every one of these sects do say and affirm constantly, that their profession and doctrine is builded upon Christ, alledging Scripture for the same. And they all and every of them, thus challenging Christ to be their foundation by Scripture, how shall any man know to which of them he may safely give credit, and so obey and follow? I trust your Lordships do see, that for unity and concord in faith and religion to be observed and continued in the Church, our Saviour Christ hath appointed one Head or Governor, that is, to wit, Peter and his successors, whose faith he promised should never decay, as we see manifestly it hath not indeed. And for those men that write and speak against his authority, if their writings and doings be well considered, they shall appear to be such as small credit or none is to be given unto, in matters of weight, such as this. For whoso readeth the third chapter of the second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, may see them there lively described with their doings. And specially one sentence therein may be applied and verified of them most justly: that is, *always learning and never coming to the knowledge of truth.* For as we see

them vary amongst themselves one from another, so no one of them doth agree with himself, in matters of religion, two years together. And as they be gone from the sure rock and stay of Christ's Church, so do they reel and waver in their doctrine, wherein no certainty nor stay can be found. Whereof St. Paul doth admonish us, in the person of his scholar Timothy, to be constant in doctrine and religion, and not to follow such men. *But as for thee*, saith St. Paul, speaking to every Christian man, *continue in those things which thou hast learned, and which he credited unto thee, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.* In which words he moveth every man to consider not only his religion and doctrine, but also, or rather, the schoolmaster of whom he learned the same. For of the knowledge, constancy, and worthiness of the schoolmaster, or teacher, may the doctrines, taught by him, be known to be good and sound, or otherwise.

"Now, if a man should ask of these men in this realm, which dissent from the Catholic Church, not only in this point of supremacy, but also in divers of the chief mysteries of our faith, of whom they learned this doctrine which they hold and teach, they must needs answer, that they learned it of the Germans. Then we may demand of them again, of whom the Germans did learn it? Whereunto they must answer, that they learned it of Luther.

Well, then, of whom did Luther learn it? Whereunto he shall answer himself, in his book that he wrote, *De Missa angulari*, where he saith, that such things as he teacheth against the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, he learned of Satan, the Devil. At whose hands, it is likely, he did also receive the rest of his doctrine.

"Then here be two points diligently to be noted. First, that this doctrine is not fifty years old; for no man taught it before Luther. And secondarily, that Luther doth acknowledge and confess the devil to be his schoolmaster in divers points of his doctrine. So that if men would diligently mind St. Paul's words, they would refuse this preverse and wicked doctrine, *knowing from whom it came.*

"But if they ask us of whom we learned our doctrine, we answer them that we learned it of our forefathers in the Catholic Church, which hath in it continuedly the Holy Spirit of God for a ruler and governor. And, again, if they ask of whom our fathers learned the same, we say of their forefathers within the same church. And so we gradually ascend in possession of our doctrine, from age to age, unto the Apostle Peter, unto whom, as St. Cyprian saith, our Saviour Christ did betake his sheep to be fed, and upon whom he founded his church.

"So that now we may be bold to stand in our doctrine and religion against our adver-

saries, seeing that theirs is not yet fifty years old, and ours above fifteen hundred years old. They have for authority and commendation of their religion, Luther and his schoolmaster before mentioned: we have for ours St. Peter and his master, Christ."

I then retired. I shall, Gentlemen, in my next letter, conclude this correspondence, with stating my reflections on the subject matter of our conversation.

I am, &c JOHN HARDMAN.

HYMN TO ST. STEPHEN, *the first Martyr.*

HAIL thou, in yet the infant Church,
The earliest martyr crown'd!
Far as she now extends o'er earth,
Great saint, thy name's renown'd.
Before their court thou'rt dragg'd, that late
Condemn'd thy Lord divine:
When lo! thy harden'd foes beheld,
Thy angel-visage, shine.
How, as in thee truth's spirit spoke,
The law thou didst expound!
How did yonr skill, their wisdom vain,
Their learning proud confound!
Cut to the heart the stubborn race,
With each foul passion fir'd;
Indignant, e'en their teeth they gnash,
By demon hate inspired.

To whom thou saidst: " In vision clear
" The op'ning heav'ns I see,
" And at his Sire's right hand enthron'd,
" That Jesus preach'd by me."
Stopping their ears with one loud voice,
Against thee they exclaim;
And furious rushing, drag thee forth,
As one they'd heard blaspheme.
The stony tempest while so fierce
They 're levelling full at thee,
" This sin, Lord, lay not to their charge,"
Thoust pray'd on bended knee.
Then straight into thy Jesus' hands
Thy soul thou didst commend
And thus his valiant champion here
Thy course didst nobly end.
O thou, who couldst, so like thy Lord,
E'en for thy murd'rers pray!
Obtain that to our enemies we
Such mercy may display!
And ever with undaunted zeal,
Like thee, the truth maintain:
Nor blush to own what reas'ners proud
And infidels disdain!
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God in Persons three,
Let creatures join to pour their praise
Through all eternity!

ON THE

RULE OF FAITH.

LETTER VI.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, *in a* Series of Letters, &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Hardman's subsequent Reflections and Researches, which lead to a happy Result.

Kirkham, May 24, 1817

GENTLEMEN,

Discussion is a useful practice, where the discovery of truth is important: and it is a most salutary expedient, where ignorance or prejudice intercepts the knowledge of religious truth. For this reason, I thank you, Gentlemen, for your pamphlet. I am grateful to you, not for what your book has done, but for what it has caused to be done. I no longer, indeed, consider it as that sound and unanswerable refutation of Popery, which my ignorance first took it to be. I am now sensible that it has neither reformed my prejudices, nor increased the sphere of my knowl-

edge. But though it has not been the efficient cause of either, I am happy to assure you that it has been the instrumental cause of both, by introducing me to this discussion with my friend Mr. Cardwell.

Unaccustomed as I have been to converse with Catholics, or to read their books on religious subjects, and, like my Protestant neighbours, taught, from my infancy, to consider Popery as a false, unscriptural, and immoral system of religion, fit only to be mentioned with abhorrence, and rejected without enquiry, I thought, with all the confidence of ignorance, and the pride of a fancied superiority, that the contest between the ancient Church and the modern sects of the Reformation, had been finally settled, and clearly decided in our favour. I had been led to believe, that our divines had refuted all the tenets of the Papists, and left them without the shadow of a reply. For many years I had been told by our late vicar in his *quarterly sermon*, that their religion was *earthly*, *sensual*, *devilish*, which none could profess, but those who obstinately shut their eyes to the light, and whose minds were given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie. This I had often been told with an air of authority, and I was simple enough to believe it. I now see the contrary. Mr. Cardwell's conversation has brought me to a more correct mode of thinking. It has opened my eyes to see that de-

lusion, inconsistency, and danger, are on our side, and that truth, stability, and security, are theirs. During the progress of our friendly discussion, I could perceive my protestant prejudices fall away one by one; and I felt my reason compelled, by the sensible observations and weighty arguments of Mr. Cardwell, to abandon, one after another, every weapon which I had chosen as the instrument of my attack on the Catholic Church. At first, I was surprised and mortified. I afterwards began to suspect that I was really the advocate of the weaker cause. On my return home from Mr. Cardwell's, my mind was fully occupied in revolving the subjects of our conversation. When I arrived at my own house, the family, who are early to bed, and early to rise, had retired to rest. Every thing was silent. The fire was burnt low, and only gave a glimmering light. As I felt an inclination to meditate, rather than a propensity to sleep, I pulled your pamphlet out of my pocket, and put it into the fire. It soon revived the dying embers, restored a comfortable blaze, and cast a cheerful light through the room. I then sat down, and reconsidered your Letters to Mr. Sherburn, and Mr. Cardwell's reflections on them. Many new ideas burst upon my mind. In my former Letters I informed you of the dispositions with which I went to attack my friend, and of the sentiments which, during the course of our

conversation, successively took possession of my mind. I will now lay before you the subsequent train of my reflections. Mr. Cardwell, said I, has begun at the right end, *The Rule of Faith.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God. There is but one Lord, ONE FAITH, one baptism." It was therefore consonant to the divine wisdom and goodness to give, and necessary for man to receive for his guidance, a Rule of Faith, which should be *plain*, *competent*, and *secure;* otherwise error would be harmless, because it would be inevitable. Now the Protestant rule, of the written word alone, as interpreted by private judgement, is deficient in all these properties, and the Catholic rule of the written word as interpreted by the Church, is invested with them all.

First, the Bible alone is not a *plain* rule. Mr. Cardwell has shewn that it is not easy, and adapted to every capacity, but often difficult even to the most learned. Immense multitudes cannot read at this day, and before the invention of printing, fewer still were able to read, and none but the wealthy could purchase a Bible. While readers and books were few, translations from the original Greek and Hebrew into modern languages were less common. Could this be a rule plain, and adapted to all capacities, which during fourteen hundred years was accessible only to the learned and the rich? And since Reading

and books became more common, the *unlearned* daily mistake the meaning of the sacred books, and pervert them into wild nonsense, or sense more impious; and the *unstable*, running into the most opposite and contradictory interpretations, can never agree upon the true sense; while it is much to be feared that both *the learned and unstable*, whose numbers are very great *wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.*

But neither is the written word alone a *competent rule.* Some things are practised by all Christians, which are either unauthorized, or forbidden by the letter of the Scripture; and some things are without scruple neglected by all, which are literally commanded by the Scripture. Mr. Hardman has instanced the observation of the Sunday, taking oaths on certain occasions, eating certain meats, neglecting certain prescribed ceremonies, retaining certain descriptions of property, and using certain forms of compliment; and the still more weighty case of infant-baptism. Neither can the Scripture alone bear testimony to that fundamental point of Christianity, the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures. The Bible-alone system undermines the Bible. It is built on fallacy. Fallacy runs through the whole of this system.

But as the Bible alone is not a plain or competent, so neither is it a secure rule. The true sense of Scripture is a secure and infal-

lible guide. But it is evinced by experience, that with the Bible before their eyes, men give conjectures for truths, and disagree on the most weighty texts: they oppose the judgment, the learning, and authority of their own sect, to that of all others; while all of them have the whole weight of the authority of the Catholic Church in the opposite scale. Where false interpretations are so easy, so common, and so momentous, who can prudently and safely rely on his own judgement?

But the word of God interpreted by the Universal Church, is a rule of a very different character. It has the properties which the other wants. The Catholic rule is plain, competent, and secure.

It is plain and easy, fitted to all capacities, and well adapted to the fallibility and weakness of human judgment. All could not read or procure Bibles; and of those who could, many have abused them, by grounding on their own misinterpretations of it, a variety of sects and false doctrines. But all Christians, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, can learn from the living voice of their pastor, by instructions adapted to their comprehension and capacity, all that is necessary for them to know. To readers so instructed and so disposed, and perhaps to them only the perusal of the Bible is very profitable. By these means alone, thousands in every past age, as well as the present, have been instructed in

the truths and duties of religion, though they would neither read nor purchase a Bible; and it is by the same means that the most learned are instructed in their infancy. The living voice of the pastor, is a rule adapted to persons of all ages, descriptions, and conditions.

It is also a competent rule. It embraces the whole doctrine of Christ. It includes the written word, and the traditions of the apostles, which are not all clearly recorded in the Scripture. The apostles delivered the whole doctrine of Christ to their successors; their successors to the next age, and so on to the present time. And in point of fact, it is by means of the Catholic rule alone, that we are certain, that the Scriptures are the genuine, authentic, inspired word of God; and, in general, it is by this means alone that we learn the true sense of Scripture, and every other point of religion, which the written word either does not contain, could not contain, or, as in the instance of swearing, observing the Sunday, &c. it appears to discountenance and forbid. His rule gives satisfaction to the conscience, where the Bible alone generates doubts and scruples.

But it is in its security that the beauty, the excellence, and perfection of the Catholic Rule shine forth with brightest lustre. First from its nature: for it does not consist of the opinions of a few moderns, but of the collec-

tive and unanimous sentiments of the Pastors of the Universal Church, both in ancient and modern times; of a body of men exceedingly numerous and widely spread, whose opinions, prejudices, manners, and customs, are in other matters very different, but whose sentiments in regard to every point of faith wonderfully, I had almost said miraculously, agree. Secondly, from its mode of communication: for learned, virtuous, wise, and experienced, as this most numerous body of pastors is, they are suspicious of their own private opinions, and are diffident of their own private judgment in the weighty and awful matters of divine faith; and holding it to be deeply sinful to admit of any addition or retrenchment, they profess conscientiously to teach that faith, and that only, which they received from their forefathers, their forefathers from their predecessors, their predecessors from the apostles, the apostles from Christ. This rule, therefore, is the safest that can be devised, and gives the greatest satisfaction and security that can be given. To oppose one's own private opinion to the unanimous judgment of such a body of pastors, acting with such wisdom and caution, exceeds the rashness and presumption of that man, who should persist in his own private interpretation of the civil law of the land, in opposition to the unanimous decision of the twelve judges, and the unanimous opinion of the whole body of lawyers.

Even if Christ had given his followers no commandment to hear the Church and obey its pastors; if he had never promised to send the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, to teach his Church all Truth; and himself to remain with it all days, even to the consummation of the world; if he had never said to the Pastors of this Church: "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth, &c. shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned;" or, as we translate it with Protestant emphasis, "shall be damned:" still, in this case, it would be the most prudent and secure way, for an humble Christian to follow the Catholic rule of faith, and the Catholic rule of interpreting the Scripture. But if Jesus Christ has given these commands, these promises, these warnings; and these gospels are an undeniable evidence that he has done this; the security of the Catholic rule, and my obligation to follow it, are established on the most solid foundation. The Bible alone may lead my fallible judgment astray: the divinely commissioned and divinely assisted Church of Christ never can.

Other considerations lead me to the same conclusion. Christ commanded the apostles to preach the gospel, not to distribute Bibles. They converted the world by preaching, not by distributing Bibles. St. John, who survived the rest of the apostles, and who put the finishing hand to the Bible, never gave it

as the sole rule of faith. He never addressed his disciples, who loved to flock round him at Ephesus, in words to this effect: "My dear children, besides the books of the Old Testament, three gospels have been compiled by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; a book called the Acts has been made public; and eighteen Letters have been written to certain bodies or individuals of the faithful, by my brothers Peter, Paul, James, and Jude. To these books I have lately added a fourth gospel, three epistles, and a treatise called the Apocalypse. Now, as my time of abiding among you is short, it is essential that you should know, that hitherto the preaching of your pastors has been the rule of faith; but this is to be your rule no longer. Henceforth these books shall be the only rule of faith to you and all the faithful, to the end of time. They contain the whole will of Christ; all the doctrine and tradition of the apostles. By reading them, and interpreting them according to your own opinion and judgment, though your interpretations may vary, you cannot err in faith. We have ordained Clement, Linus, Timothy, Ignatius, Polycarp, &c. to succeed us, and charged them to ordain other pastors in like manner. But though they are good and lawfully appointed pastors, they will be unsafe guides. Accordingly, they are invested with no interpretative authority. Read the Bible, and interpret it for yourselves. The

Bible, I say the Bible is henceforth the only religion of Christians." Had this last of the apostles been a Protestant, or if his disciples were to be Protestants after his decease, he ought to have spoken or written to this effect; and considering the greatness of the change, which was likely to affect every point of belief, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have done so. Had St. John been a Protestant, or a member of the Bible Society, he would have written a *fourth* Epistle, for the express purpose of conveying this most important injunction to all future ages. But he gave no such injunction. Speaking in the capacity of a pastor of the Church, he expressly says: "He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. By THIS we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error." (1 Epis. iv. 6.) This accords with the spirit of all his brethren. It is no less clear and decisive than the command of St. Paul: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. Hold fast the traditions. Mark them who cause dissensions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learnt, and avoid them." It agrees with the admonition of St. Peter, to beware of the rule "of private interpretation;" and with the entreaty of St. Jude, to follow the Catholic rule of tradition, and "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

The Catholics might have argued thus, and Mr. Cardwell tells me they did argue thus, *a priori*, when Luther first proclaimed the Rule of the Bible alone, before this new rule had produced its natural effects on the minds of *unlearned* and *unstable* Protestants. But aided by the experience of three centuries of biblical experiment, we can carry the argument much further. What the sixteenth century proved *a priori*, the eighteenth can demonstrate *a posteriori*, from effects. Thus at length the Catholic principle is illustrated and confirmed by Protestant experiments. Faith, reason, and experience, now lead to the same conclusion, that the Bible alone is not the rule of faith. Mr. Cardwell has shewn, that none do in fact follow the Bible alone: that this outcry is, in some, the watchword of party; in others, the language of insincerity; in others, the raving of mad fanaticism; in all, the cause of much fickleness, uncertainty, and discrepancy in faith: that it is the source of all that scandalous and daily increasing multiplicity of sects, which is the reproach of the North of Europe, and particularly of this once catholic island, and that there can be no unity of faith, no refutation of error, no conviction of heresy or schism, while every man has a right to form his faith according to his own construction of the texts of the Bible. To believe only our own interpretation of the

Bible, is, in other words, to believe and disbelieve what we please.

Here, then, I stand on solid ground, supported by Catholic faith on my right hand, and by Protestant experiments on my left. The tree is known by its fruits. Let us apply this criterion to the matter in question. The Catholic rule has preserved, during eighteen centuries, and still preserves, in these latter ages of licentious disputation, and fearless innovation, that sacred unity of faith, which is such an imperative duty, and so evident a mark of divinely revealed truth. The objections which we oppose to it, are grounded less upon the reason of the thing, than on our misconception of their doctrine, or on our own peculiar misconstruction of the Scripture; and the greater part of our abuse of that doctrine, moderation would spare. But the rule of private interpretation has produced errors without number, and evils beyond calculation. Private interpretation of the sacred, but abused Bible! Thine are the heresies of Luther and Calvin, from which so many other sects have sprung. Thine are the errors of Muncer, and Zuingle, of Cranmer, Cromwell, Socinus, and Bayle. Thine are the dreams of Mede and Swedenburg, of Brothers, Huntington, and Southcott, Thine are the sects of the philosophizing Priestley, and the enthusiastic Wesley, which have so nearly emptied our parish churches, and absorbed our

establishment, leaving it no means of self-defence, without stepping back on catholic ground. Private interpretation! Thine are the lust and sacrileges of Luther, Henry, and Cranmer. Thine are the unholy rapacity of Seymour, the despotism and murders of Elizabeth, the seditions, usurpations, and dethronements of succeeding reigns. Thou hast perverted religion, disturbed society, poisoned justiee, and persecuted virtue. Thou mingledst the cup of malice, hatred and revenge; and my unhappy country has drunk it to the dregs, and to the astonishment of Europe, is still intoxicated with its bitterness! Are these the fruits of a good or evil tree? The barrenness of the fig tree appears more tolerable than such fruitfulness in evil.

From these considerations I draw the same inference which Mr. Cardwell does.

1. The Bible was not the Rule of Faith in the first century of the Christian Church.

2. It was not written on the plan, nor with the intent, that it should, in succeeding ages, supersede the original rule established by Christ, and acted upon by all the apostles.

3. This anticatholic rule, condemned by the concurring voice of Scripture and Tradition, is a modern invention, adopted by innovators to serve their own purposes.

4. The innovators themselves, who invented, or adopted this new rule, never followed it in all things; but only so far as their own

humour, convenience, prejudice, or passion suggested.

5. The effects which this rule has produced, in the belief and practice of the enthusiasts who have followed it, shew, that if it does good by chance, it produces evil by necessity.

Consequently, the Bible alone, left to each one's private interpretation, is not by divine institution the sole and exclusive rule of faith; nor is it in practice, of itself, a plain, competent, and secure guide, on which a prudent christian can venture his salvation.

But on the contrary, these following propositions are equally evident to my reason.

1. The Catholic Rule of Faith was that which Christ instituted: a rule which the apostles never repealed, but which they referred to in their ministry, and enjoined in their writings to the strict observance of all future ages.

2. The Catholic rule is no less admirable in its effects, than holy in its origin, and venerable in the continuity of its practice.

3. The Catholic rule alone is adapted to the weakness and fallibility of the human understanding. It is alone calculated to check pride, to encourage humility, to instruct ignorance, to resist innovation, to detect heresy, to refute error, and to preserve, in all ages and nations, the sacred and lovely unity of "that faith which was first delivered to the saints," and which the divine Author and Fi-

nisher of our Faith framed with such wisdom and perfection, as never to require *Reformation* from sinners.

4. The apostolic antiquity, the perpetuity, universality, consistency, and security of the catholic rule, compared with the newness, the contracted locality, the inconsistency, and instability of its heterodox rival, prove to my satisfaction, that this catholic rule alone is that plain, adequate, and safe, because infallible guide, which it was consonant to the Divine Wisdom to ordain; and on which a prudent christian can with perfect confidence rely, for the purity and integrity of his faith.

5. Scripture proves nothing when it is quoted in a wrong sense. In this manner the devil quoted scripture against our Saviour, with all the Bible pedantry of the most Methodistic Protestant. To ascertain the right sense of a disputed passage, it is wiser and better to hear the Church, than to set up my own private opinion, in opposition to that venerable and competent authority. This is the guide that I have hitherto wanted. In this rule no fallacy lurks.

6. If this church, authorized and acting in the manner described by Mr. Cardwell, holds some doctrines which are contrary to my construction of the Bible, but conformable to her own unvaried interpretation; or, if I judge that some of her tenets are not expressed in the Bible, but she assures me that she re-

ceived them by uninterpreted Tradition from the Apostles, and, moreover, shows me that this is a plain matter of historical fact, it is far more likely that she is right and I wrong, than that I am in the right and she in an error. Here it is the part of prudence and of virtue, for me to acquiesce in her better judgment, and not to cavil with the obstinacy of heresy, but to believe with the docility of faith.

Gentlemen, I have now communicated to you the substance of our observations on the nature and tendency of your pamphlet. I have also laid before you the subsequent reflections which so powerfully struck my mind the same evening before I retired to rest. Your candour will excuse the imperfections of my report. During the progress of these Letters, I have reconsidered the subject with mature deliberation. I have read with great attention the books which Mr. Cardwell recommended to my perusal. I have found particularly convincing and decisive, Mr. Fletcher's *Sermons on the Marks of the true Church*, Mr. Berington's *Faith of Catholics confirmed by Scripture, and attested by the Fathers of the five first centuries*, and Bishop Hay's *Sincere Christian instructed in the Faith of Christ from the written Word.* To the sincerity of these inquiries, I have joined fervent prayer to God, for the assistance of his grace to enlighten and direct me. My research

has been successful. My prayers have been heard. God has blessed the labours of my search after the truth; because my will was upright, and my heart was sincere. Philip asked the Ethiopian who was reading the Bible: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" He answered: "How can I, except some one should guide me?" (Acts viii. 30.) I am now perfectly convinced of what I did not even suspect, before my winter evening conversation with Mr. Cardwell, that the wisest, as well as the simplest reader of the Bible, is often in the same predicament as the Eunuch; and equally needs the guidance of a Philip. It is your case at present, and it has been mine. I have been benighted in the Scriptures for want of a sure guide. I read my Bible, but to little purpose or, profit, till I was furnished with the Catholic key to its hidden treasures.

I have often been delighted with the good sense, but, as a Protestant, puzzled with the practical conclusion to be drawn from the words of Dr. Field, formerly Dean of Gloucester, and designed Bishop of Oxford, whom Fuller calls "that learned divine, whose memory smelleth like *a field* which the Lord hath blessed." This Protestant divine says: "Seeing the controversies of religion in our time are grown in number so many, and in nature so intricate, that few have time and leisure, fewer, strength of understanding to

examine them, what resteth for men desirous of satisfaction, but diligently to search out which, amongst all the societies of men in the world, is that blessed company of holy ones, that household of truth, that Spouse of Christ, and church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the Truth: *that so they may embrace her communion, follow her directions, and rest in her judgment?* What madness therefore, were it for a man to tire out his soul and waste away his spirits, in tracing out all the thorny paths of the controversies of these days, wherein to err is no less easy than dangerous; and not rather to betake himself to the right path of truth, whereunto God and nature, reason and experience, do all give witness? *And that is, to associate himself to that Church, where the custody of this heavenly and supernatural truth hath been by heaven itself committed; to weigh discreetly which is the true Church; and that being once found, to receive faithfully and obediently, without doubt and discussion, whatsoever she delivereth.*" (Treatise of the Church, Epist. Ded.) I am no longer puzzled, or perplexed with this inquiry, or the result to which it leads. It leads not to the reformed camp of Luther and his host; but to one more ancient, more authentic, better disciplined, and less suspicious. My choice is now decided: my faith is settled. Next Sunday I will go with my friend Mr. Cardwell to the Catholic Church, and will

henceforth seek the peace, comfort, and security of truth, in the sincere profession of the Apostles' Creed: *I believe the Holy Catholic Church.*

That you may cease to bewilder yourself, and mislead others, by vain expositions of the Holy Bible; that you may follow, not the misinterpreted letter of the Bible, which killeth, but the catholic spirit of it, which giveth life, and that, leaving the delusive path of private judgment and passion, in which all heresiarchs have gone astray, you may have the glory and happiness to come to the knowledge and profession of Catholic truth, shall be the earnest prayer of, Gentlemen,

Your sincere well-wisher
and Catholic friend,
JOHN HARDMAN.

OF ANTICHRIST.

1. Our Adversaries endeavour to persuade the illiterate, that the Pope is Antichrist. It is easy to conjecture, what object they have in view in so doing. Doubtless to justify and excuse their desertion from the Catholic Faith under the pretext of a defection from Antichrist.

In this chapter, therefore, we shall first give the sentiments of Catholics in relation to Antichrist. Next, we shall answer the quibbles, to which our Adversaries resort, that they might impose upon the credulity of the people, and affix upon the venerable Father of the Faithful, whom the whole Catholic world, for 1800 years, has acknowledged and respected as the successor of St. Peter, the visible Head of the Church, and Christ's

viceregent on earth, the vile appellation of *the man of sin.* Then we shall leave our readers to judge how successful they have been in their attempt.

2. The name Antichrist, signifies an enemy, or an adversary of Christ, and is taken in a twofold sense. First, generally, for every Adversary of Christ; such are all Heretics. In this sense, is understood what is said by the Apostle, 1 Jno. 2. 18. *Even now there are become many Antichrists;* that is, many Heretics, who think erroneously concerning Christ, and of whom it is said, *They went out from us, but they were not of us.* In the same sense is understood that of 1 Jno. 4. 3. *Every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God, and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world.* Secondly, it is taken in a particular sense, for the chief, or principal Adversary of Christ, to whom all the rest are so many precursors. It is of him, that St. Paul speaks in 2 Thess. 2. 3. *Unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God.* St. Augustine makes a

similar distinction. Lib. 2. contra Advers. legis. cap. 12. St. Damascen lib. 4. cap. 27. Having made this distinction, we lay down two positions.

3. First, Antichrist, in the special acceptation of the term, as the principal enemy of Christ, has not as yet come into the world. It is proved thus. 1. Because he will not come, until the Roman Empire shall have been overturned and desolated, as the ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin, affirm in many parts of their writings. They confirm their assertion from Dan. cap. 2 & 7. Apoc. cap. 17. But the Roman Empire has not yet been overturned and desolated. Therefore Antichrist has not yet come. 2. Because in the time of Antichrist, there are to come two witnesses, clothed in sackcloth and ashes. *They shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, and they shall have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and they have power over waters to turn them into blood.* Apoc. 11. 3. 6. But these two witnesses have not yet come. The conclusion is obvious.

4. Secondly, that the Pope is not Anti-

christ, is evident from what is already said. 1. Because Antichrist has not yet come, nor will he come, until the Roman Empire shall have been destroyed. But the Pope did come while the Roman Empire was in a flourishing condition. 2. Antichrist will slay those two Prophets, who are spoken of in the Apocalypse, 11. 7. This no Pope has yet done. To the above we add three more arguments. First, Antichrist will reign only three years and a half, Dan. 7. 25. *A time, and times, and a half a time.* Apocal. 11. 2. *Two and forty months*, ibid. ver. 3, *one thousand two hundred and sixty days.* But the Pope has already reigned for many centuries. Secondly, Antichrist will be received, by the Jews, for the Messiah, Jno. 5. 43. and 2 Thess. 2. 10. But no Pope was ever received by them for the Messiah. Thirdly, Antichrist will cause fire to descend from heaven, (Apoc. 13. 13.) But no Pope ever did this.

5. Objections of our Adversaries. The marks of Antichrist agree with the Pope. The first is, to fall from the faith, 2 Thess. 22. But the Pope, say they, has fallen from

the faith, because he defends the doctrine of Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and such like!!! The *second* is, to sit in the temple of God (ibid). But the Pope sits in the Church of Christ at Rome. The *third* is, to show himself as God (ibid). This the Pope does, because he exhibits and proclaims himself as the visible Head of the Church. The *fourth* is, to lift himself above all that is God (ibid). This the Pope does, because he raises himself above all Ecclesiastical and political order. The *Fifth* is to deny Christ. 1 Jno. 2. 22. This also the Pope does, because he corrupts the doctrine of Christ the Mediator. *Sixth* is, to perform false miracles. This the Pope has done. *Seventh* is, to impress a character on his subjects. This the Pope does, when he signs the foreheads of Christians, with the unction of Chrism, in Confirmation!!!

We answer, that these are mere quibbles, and hope that our readers will not smile at us, for taking up the matter so seriously, as even to notice them. For, be it said, to the discredit of many Protestants both in Europe and in our own country, from whose good

sense we had reason to expect something more worthy, of this *so much boasted, enlightened age*, that the above are brought forward as weighty arguments, against the Pope.*

---

* It was a source of considerable amusement to the catholics to behold, a few years past, the exultation, with which the protestant public, and particularly the protestant clergy, hailed the destruction, as they had fondly imagined, of the papal succession; and with it, of popery itself. The reader will remember, that, when the revolutionary tyrants of France had expelled the venerable Pius VI. from his see, and consigned him to prisons, and distress,—then half the churches of this nation resounded with the glad text—"Rome is fallen." This, too, was the epitaph, which was, every where, triumphantly prepared to be affixed to the mausoleum of the departed pontiff. Induced by this laughable spectacle, an eloquent foreign writer makes the following reflections on it:—

"It has always been one of the maladies of protestantism, to predict the fall of popery, and the subversion of the papal power. Not errors the most absurd; not mistakes the most glaring; not nonsense the most laughable, could ever correct its professors of this folly. They have still constantly returned to the charge. And never were these prophets so bold in predicting this awful revolution, as when, recently, they imagined, it had actually arrived.

First, to defend the doctrine of Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, is not to fall from the Faith, because such is the Doctrine, which has been believed and taught at all times, from the first establishment of Christianity down to the present, in proof of which we have only to refer to the writings of the Holy Fathers and Ecclesiastical historians of every age, who are all unanimous on this subject. May

---

" In this career of madness, there are no classes of men, that have distinguished themselves so strikingly, as the Protestant clergy. These men have published a countless multitude of the most useful works,—useful, because they are the disgrace of the human understanding; and must compel men,—if they are not condemned to total blindness,—to enter into themselves. At the sight of the sovereign pontiff, driven, a few years ago, into exile, imprisoned, insulted, and deprived of his territories,—it was easy for these prophets to foretel, that, now, it was all over with his spiritual supremacy, and his temporal power. Plunged in the deepest darkness, and condemned with justice to the two-fold chastisement of seeing in the Scriptures, what is not there; and of not seeing, what they contain most clearly;—they undertook, by the help of these sacred pages, to prove to us, that his supremacy,—which we are divinely, and literally, assured, shall

we not rather say, that our Adversaries have fallen from the faith, who oppose this doctrine? *Secondly*, It is one thing, to sit in the temple of God at Jerusalem, and another, to sit in the Church of Christ at Rome. Antichrist will sit in the temple of Jerusalem, and be adored by the Jews. The Pope sits in the Church of Christ at Rome, which our Adversaries have deserted. *Thirdly*, to exhibit himself as the visible Head of the

---

endure for ever,—was on the point of vanishing for ever. Nay; they even found out the very hour, and minute, of its fall. They found out this in the apocalypse,—a book, fatal to protestant writers; and in which they never engage, without losing their common sense. Against sophisms, the most preposterous, the catholic has no other arms to present, but those of reason. But God, when his wisdom requires it, refutes them by wonders. For, behold, whilst these false prophets were yet speaking with all this confidence; and the public, as if drunk with error, were listening eagerly to them,—the Almighty, by a striking attestation of his power, and by an inexplicable reconciliation of states the most discordant, sent back the venerable pontiff to the Vatican;—where his hand, extended only to bless, already called down mercy, and the light of heaven, upon the authors of these pitiful productions."

Church, is not the same, as to set himself up for God. St. Peter exhibited himself in the former manner: but Antichrist will exhibit himself in the latter. *Fourthly*, even Moses was above all Ecclesiastical and political order, and yet did not lift himself above God. *Fifthly*, Our Adversaries have not yet been able to prove that the Pope has corrupted the doctrine of Christ the Mediator. Nay, they themselves have corrupted the doctrine of Christ, as we have already shown. *Sixthly*, it is not the Pope, but God, who performs miracles. Our Adversaries are bound to show, that the Pope has performed those miracles, which Scripture says, Antichrist will work; of this kind are the two following. 1. To draw down fire from heaven. 2. To cause the image of the beast to speak. Apoc. 13. 13. We do not read, that the Pope has yet done either. *Seventhly*, the character of Antichrist, should have three qualifications. 1. That it should be common to all, great and small, rich and poor, freemen and slaves. 2. That it should be impressed on the forehead, or on the right hand. 3. That no man should buy or sell, unless he have this character. Apoc.

13. 16. and chap. 14. But these conditions do not agree with the unction of Chrism. Therefore these objections of our Adversaries are fruitless, and of no weight whatever.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Jan. 2006

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BX
1755

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 287 509 9